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SEPTEMBER 15, 2008
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Are You *Really* an Environmentalist?

BY TERRY L. ANDERSON AND LAURA E. HUGGINS

There are two ways to show you are green. One is to preach, sue, lobby and spend; the other is to find ways to nudge people in environmental directions by changing their economic incentives. Greener Than Thou ***demonstrates with fascinating case histories—ranging from Alaskan halibut to Bolivian bees to Mexican jaguars—how much more can be achieved the second way.***

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In six insightful essays, Terry Anderson and Laura Huggins make a powerful argument for free market environmentalism. They break down liberal and conservative stereotypes of what it means to be an environmentalist and show that, by forming local coalitions around market principles, stereotypes can be replaced by pragmatic solutions that improve environmental quality without increasing red tape.

The authors point out that people don't take care of resources they don't own. Conservation, they explain, boils down to rewarding the private landowner who protects the environment. They illustrate how such incentives are leading to environmental improvements and show that, whether the issue is management of public lands, water or air quality, or even global warming, free market environmentalism provides an alternative to command-and-control regulation.

Terry L. Anderson, the John and Jean DeNault Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, is the executive director of PERC (the Property and Environment Research Center), a think tank in Bozeman, Montana, that focuses on market solutions to environmental problems, and professor emeritus at Montana State University.

Laura E. Huggins is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and director of publications at PERC.

October 2008, 148 pages
ISBN: 978-0-8179-4851-1 $25.00, cloth
ISBN: 978-0-8179-4852-8 $15.00, paper

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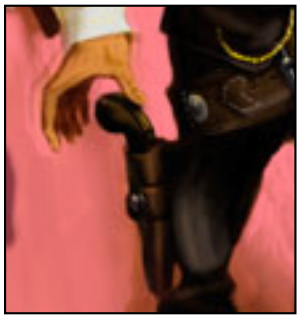
Contents

September 15, 2008 • Volume 14, Number 1

2 Scrapbook ..... *Sarah Palin's foreign policy team*
4 Casual ..... *Philip Terzian, good ol' boy*
5 Correspondence ..... *Obama and campaign finance*
7 Editorial ..... *Thanks, Guys*

Articles

8 McCain Finds the Right Wingman *And she's a woman* ..... BY STEPHEN F. HAYES
11 A Party of Mavericks *Can there be such a thing?* ..... BY FRED BARNES
12 Axis of Honor *The McCain-Palin-Lieberman connection* ..... BY NOEMIE EMERY
14 Punishing Russia *A how-to guide* ..... BY GARY SCHMITT
15 Biden's One Accomplishment *Will the Democrats bring up crime this fall?* ..... BY ELI LEHRER
16 Tax Cuts, Real and Imaginary *Obama's spending programs in disguise* ..... BY NEWT GINGRICH & PETER FERRARA



Cover: Thomas Fluharty

Features

18 Game Changer ..... BY JESSICA GAVORA
Will the battle of 2008 turn out to have been won on the playing fields of Alaska?

21 Among the Paultards ..... BY MATT LABASH
Even they are ashamed of their candidate's supporters

25 Why They Hate Her ..... BY JEFFREY BELL
Sarah Palin is a smart missile aimed at the heart of the left

Books & Arts

29 Who Gets In *And what happens once they're here* ..... BY PETER SKERRY
32 Alien Nation *In the Blobosphere, the horror of 1958 lives on* ..... BY SHAWN MACOMBER
35 Founders Afloat *'The fortunes of the nation and its navy' have always been linked* ..... BY JOSEPH F. CALLO
37 Poet of Reason *Mary Jo Salter rewards her readers with clarity and wit* ..... BY WYATT PRUNTY
39 Dearly Beloved *Marriage is an honorable estate, and endures for good reason* ..... BY ERIN MONTGOMERY
40 Parody ..... *'US Weekly' salutes Stalin*

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The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of News America Incorporated, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-850-682-7644 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2008, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of News America Incorporated.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Plus ça change

One of the mysteries of this presidential campaign has been the furor in Democratic circles over the pregnancy of Governor Sarah Palin's eldest daughter, Bristol. Of course, as The Scrapbook readily acknowledges, the fact that Bristol Palin is 17 years old, and not yet married to the father of her baby, was bound to raise some eyebrows and inspire irreverent jokes—even among Republicans. That's the way of the world. But in characteristic fashion, many progressives have reacted not with understanding, or even amusement, but with near-unrestrained fury. In particular, the blogosphere has been rife with gynecologic terminology and demands for medical records, Governor Palin has been accused of bad parenting, and her daughter has been subject to rumors and innuendo beyond description.

To his credit, Barack Obama declared that the Palin children are "off limits" in the campaign, but that message seems not yet to have penetrated the ranks of his supporters. This makes Democrats look both supremely foolish and astonishingly cruel. There is no family in America devoid of the occasional misstep, and there is a world of difference between a teenage pregnancy and genuine malfeasance. Governor Palin has been candid about the matter, and as a parent, compassionate and practical. Beyond that, there's nothing to say.

Except, perhaps, that there is a historical parallel of sorts—and an instructive one at that. As every schoolboy knows, Grover Cleveland was the Democratic candidate for president in 1884, and in the course of the campaign, a Republican newspaper reported that Cleveland (who was not married) had once fathered a child. Naturally, his campaign was caught flat-footed by the story, but Governor Cleveland wired some famous instructions to his staff: "Whatever you say, tell the truth."

The truth was that Cleveland had once formed an "illicit connection" with a widow named Maria Halpin, and a baby had been born. The evidence was not conclusive that Cleveland was the father, but he had assumed responsibility for the child and refused to dissemble about the matter when running for president. Americans were impressed. Holier-than-thou Republicans were made to look silly, Cleveland came across as brave and honorable, and he won the election.

Cleveland, by the way, had been just another lawyer in Buffalo when he became the "Veto Mayor" in 1882, cleaning up political graft, and was elected the reform governor of New York later that year, taking on the powers within his own political party. Sound familiar? On election night 1884 his supporters gathered at polling places and sang the following tune:

Hurrah for Maria,
Hurrah for the kid;
We voted for Grover,
And we're damned glad we did!

The Scrapbook wonders if this famous quatrain might be adapted for Election Night 2008. ♦

Sarah Palin Assembles Her Foreign Policy Team

(Actually, the governor visits the Little Norway Festival, Petersburg, Alaska, 2007.)

Giving the Surge Its Due

Where does the *New York Times* bury good news that it feels it must report but disapproves of? Why, in the Saturday paper of Labor Day weekend, naturally. That's where you'll find Michael Gordon's excellent account, "Troop 'Surge' Took Place Amid Doubt

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of June 11, 2001)

and Debate," of how President Bush finally turned the Iraq war around. (Readers may recall that Fred Barnes wrote a similar account in these pages, "How Bush Decided on the Surge," February 4, 2008; not being the *New York Times*, we featured it on the cover.)

Writes Gordon:

> The White House has long touted the "surge" of forces in Iraq as one of President Bush's proudest achievements. But that decision, one of Mr. Bush's most consequential as commander in chief, was made only after months of tumultuous debate within the administration, according to still-secret memorandums and interviews with a broad range of current and former officials.
>
> In January 2007, at a time when the situation in Iraq appeared the bleakest, Mr. Bush chose a bold option that was at odds with what many of his civilian and military advisers, including his field commander, initially recommended. Mr. Bush's plan to send more than 20,000 troops to carry out a new counterinsurgency strategy has helped to reverse the spiral of sectarian killings in Iraq.

Our only quibble is with that *but* in the second sentence, which suggests that making the correct decision after tumultuous debate, over the opposition of many of his advisers, somehow renders the president's decision less praiseworthy. To the contrary, it underscores the leadership he showed against all odds. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

'Has anyone noticed that Sarah Palin's central claim to political fame is a fraud? She represents herself as a fiscal conservative who . . ." (Eugene Robinson, *Washington Post*, Sept. 2, 2008). ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish, II

'I put on a shalwar kameez and a headscarf in Morocco for a trip to the bazaar. Yes, some of the warmth I encountered was probably from the novelty of seeing a Westerner so clothed; but, as I moved about the market—the curve of my breasts covered, the shape of my legs obscured, my long hair not flying about me—I felt a novel sense of calm and serenity. I felt, yes, in certain ways, free. Nor are Muslim women alone. The Western Christian tradition portrays all sexuality, even married sexuality, as sinful. Islam and Judaism never had that same kind of . . ." (Naomi Wolf, "Beyond the veil lives a thriving Muslim sexuality," *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 30, 2008). ♦

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Casual

Down in the Boondocks

John McCain of Arizona chose to introduce Sarah Palin of Alaska to the Republican ticket in Dayton, Ohio, of all places. There are good reasons why Ohio's sixth largest city was chosen for this honor, I am sure; but the venue seemed to annoy a young editorial aide at the *Washington Post* who grew up in Dayton and wrote a piece lamenting McCain's political calculation.

"Everybody knows that as goes Ohio, so goes the nation," wrote Emily Langer. "But the buttering up of heartland swing states every fourth year seems a little rich because—let's be honest—back in Washington, midwesterners aren't exactly viewed as the cream of the national crop."

To which she responded with a short personal list of distinguished Ohioans—for example, Sarah Jessica Parker of *Sex and the City*—and a long list of casual insults she has suffered since arriving in Washington. Her classmates at Georgetown assumed she must have been relieved to "get out" of Ohio, and one was amazed that a midwesterner could do well in Italian. Everyone imagines she grew up within striking distance of a herd of cattle, and her boss at the *Post* gets Ohio confused with Iowa.

I'm sympathetic, of course, but only up to a point. For if Ms. Langer *really* wants to rub up against toxic regional prejudice, she should tell people she's from the South.

Strictly speaking, I am not a southerner myself: I was born below the Mason-Dixon line (Maryland), but both my parents were from Philadelphia, my Civil War ancestor fought in the Union army, and I grew up in the Washington area, which, while southern to some degree, would not strike anyone from, say, Alabama as Dixie. But I have lived in the South, and, most important, my alluring wife hails from Nashville. It was she who first drew my attention to the remarkable things non-southerners seem to believe about the South and trained my ear to listen for the astonishing things people will say when southerners identify themselves.

Like Ms. Langer's midwesterners, southerners are frequently perceived as dim, especially in high-octane venues like Manhattan or Martha's Vineyard, but unlike midwesterners, they are also seen as vaguely malignant, products of a sinister social culture. When my wife was a student at Williams College (Massachusetts), she told her New England prep school-bred classmates that the state of Tennessee had issued her a pair of shoes to avoid embarrassing her home state. No one thought she was joking.

DARREN GYGI

A few examples from popular culture are instructive. Readers will recall *Newhart*, the 1980s sitcom starring Bob Newhart that was set at a Vermont—I repeat, Vermont—inn. Every week three hayseeds would walk into the lobby, and the one who could speak would introduce himself, in a broad southern accent—"Hi, I'm Larry. This is my brother Darryl and this is my other brother Darryl"—to thunderous studio laughter.

Then there was *The Burning Bed* (1984), the made-for-TV version of Faith McNulty's bestseller about a woman who killed her wife-beating husband by setting him on fire. The movie was set in Michigan, and the wife was played by Farrah Fawcett, of *Charlie's Angels* fame. Farrah's violent husband and his drunken, gun-crazy pals all spoke a thick southern patois—in Michigan—while she and her friends at the shelter sounded as if they had just left the refectory at Bryn Mawr. I once sat next to Faith McNulty at dinner and related my amusement at the spectacle of indigenous bad guys with southern accents in Michigan. A New Englander by way of New York, she had not noticed the incongruity.

My favorite example of this sort of misapprehension occurred during my tenure at the *Los Angeles Times*. One day one of the editorial secretaries, a gay Jewish male, told me he was traveling back East to visit his family in Philadelphia and Miami. I asked him if he planned to drive from Pennsylvania to Florida, and he literally reared back in horror.

"Are you kidding?" he exclaimed. "With *my* name?"

Clearly he had seen enough movies and TV dramas—or comedies, for that matter—to know that the minute he slowed down at a traffic light in, say, North Carolina, the local Klan would identify a Jewish Yankee motorist, surround his car, taunt him, drag him from the wheel, and—well, you've seen *Deliverance*. I do remember telling him that, all things being equal, he was undoubtedly in greater peril in certain parts of L.A. than in the whole state of Mississippi, but he had the healthy skepticism of anyone who's watched *In the Heat of the Night*.

So I say to Ms. Langer, as I've said to my wife: Things could be worse. Yes, it's irritating (as a midwesterner/southerner) to confront bias and condescension, but imagine telling people you're from New Jersey!

Philip Terzian

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Campaign Finance Crime

Allison R. Hayward knows a good deal about election law, and she writes with verve and wit, making good entertainment of what is often the dreariest subjects. In The Weekly Standard, she turns these talents to the task of defending the American Issues Project and its financier, Harold Simmons ("Shut Up, They Explained," September 8).

Before long, she has repackaged this little political start-up and pronounced it a tax-exempt "social welfare organization," and the multibillionaire Harold Simmons becomes, at the touch of her magic keyboard, a mere victim of laws ambiguously drafted and now put to dastardly partisan misuse. The charges against AIP and Mr. Simmons are merely, she writes, "campaign finance hyperformalism," by which she means that AIP and Simmons are guilty, at most, of filing the wrong "paper" with the government.

All skillfully done, and the effect Hayward achieves is in large measure owing to her careful management of the facts. If the facts are allowed to speak for themselves, the story is scarcely one of constitutional heroism and brutal political oppression.

1. "AIP is a new name for an older tax-exempt group." This is Hayward's characterization of this group's purchase of an identity. This is not simply a new name; it is a new "group," two individuals with a plan and a third with the money to fund it, who are nesting within an operation, long defunct, that it is borrowing for the present purpose. The date of this identity heist? August 2008, the same month that the ads in question began to run.

2. Again, Hayward: "The American Issues Project is a tax-exempt social welfare organization." This is not clear at all: If there is a "new name" and "new management," it may be what it appears to be: a new organization, and its tax-exempt purpose is asserted, not shown. The organization has yet to release its records, which it is obligated by law and has pledged to do: We shall see what these papers show, but unless Hayward failed to mention it, she has not yet seen them. She is seeing here only what she wishes to see.

3. And more from Hayward: "AIP declares that it was formed to promote political ideas, but that campaign advocacy is *not* its major purpose" (emphasis in the original). Can you measure "purpose"? This is where the sudden emergence of this organization and the hard fact of its conducting only election-related activity slips stealthily from Hayward's account. By any measure, the organization's purpose—whether it is "a" or "the" major purpose—is election-related: This electioneering is all it has to show for an existence of barely a month's time.

4. And the unfortunate, much picked-upon Mr. Simmons! Why, in Hayward's words, he "undeniably has the right to spend his own money on a campaign ad berating Barack Obama." Hayward wonders, then, why we should care whether he does so independently, as an individual, filing reports in his own name, or simply puts up the case for the fictitious "AIP."

The reason, one might assume, is that he and his partners like the ring of the "American Issues Project," passed off as a "social welfare" organization, and that it would serve his interests to have the public hearing the ad imagine that it is the collective effort of "citizens"—not the pet political project of a fabulously wealthy financier with a—to put it politely—exotic business and political past.

After all, if the ad closes with "Paid for by Harold Simmons and not authorized by any candidate or candidate committee," the next question is: "Who is Harold Simmons?" And he, it is fair to speculate, prefers not to have the question asked.

Simmons's innocence in this matter is belied by his history with political money. The Federal Election Commission fined him for twice exceeding the aggregate cycle limit on federal contributions: once in 1989 and once in 1990. Thereafter, his daughters alleged in legal action against him that he had drawn on a family trust fund for additional contributions in their names that they neither knew about nor approved ("family feud shows how rich spread political gifts; Simmons sisters dispute donations in their names," *Dallas Morning News*, May 4, 1997).

So Hayward has rewoven these threads into a tale far nobler than the participants deserve. This "group" is three people, one of whom has the money, donning the identity of an organization long out of business, and their purpose is to put on this disguise so that they can run political ads as a "social welfare organization" with Mr. Simmon's unlimited money and avoid various requirements of the law.

Objections to this conduct strike Hayward as "campaign finance hyperformalism"—too much fussing about the proper choice of paperwork. But she also complains about the lack of "clear standards" in the law. It seems that she should choose one defense or the other: The law is either fatuously formal, clear but silly in the lines it draws, or the lines are not clearly drawn.

But this is not a case where a collection of average citizens stumbled into a regulatory problem, no fault of theirs. They went about their business with the determination to steer around legal limits and fund their election-related activities just as they chose.

That this scheme was clumsy, and that the AIP clan will eventually have to answer for their violations, does not thrust them suddenly into a sympathetic light, and that the Obama campaign intends to see this through, to enforcement, does not make it an oppressor.

If this would cheer her, Allison R. Hayward might consider the Obama campaign's gesture of bipartisanship: assisting John McCain with the enforcement of the law he has championed, the most recent amendment to which was signed into law by President Bush.

Note: The undersigned is the general

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counsel to Obama for America, responsible for what Allison refers to, critically, as the "campaign's lawyering priorities." This letter also appears on his website, www.moresoftmoneyhardlaw.com.

BOB BAUER
Washington, D.C.

ALLISON R. HAYWARD RESPONDS: I enjoy Bob Bauer's spirited defense of the Obama campaign's steps against AIP. To respond briefly to his points, and at the risk of alienating every reader who isn't already a campaign finance geek:

Bauer disputes that AIP is a new name for an old group, observes that it may not properly be administered as tax-exempt, and declares that AIP's purpose is "election related." These are legal conclusions he reaches with the facts he has in hand, not, as he would have it, "facts" representing the whole picture. They are, by the way, conclusions typically left to federal administrative authorities in the context of civil enforcement. Recall that the Obama legal strategy is not one limited to civil enforcement. Bauer is contending that AIP/Simmons is in "knowing and willful" criminal violation.

Bauer agrees that Harold Simmons would have the right as an individual to spend his own money in unlimited amounts on this same ad, and so he must agree that the crux of the issue is whether, by giving that same money to AIP, he committed a crime. That is precisely the point I felt worth making. Whether the money comes from Simmons or Soros, it seems like "hyperformalism" to recognize the one type of spending as protected First Amendment activity and the other as criminal.

Bob Bauer is a student of campaign finance regulation of the highest order. He may recall that one impediment to the full enforcement of campaign finance laws prior to the 1970s was the fact that violations were punished as crimes. Whatever one's frustrations with the pace of FEC or IRS enforcement, I wouldn't think he would choose those days over today.

Obama's Résumé

I share Dean Barnett's opinion that Barack Obama's résumé should raise red flags ("Would You Hire Barack Obama?" September 1). Not only has his career been strange for a lawyer, but it also lacks any important achievements. If I headed up a law firm, I would have to think three times before extending Obama a job offer.

I have had the misfortune to be the one to fire people like Obama from a couple of different companies I have worked for in the past. They are highly intelligent, but lack the drive to complete the work or project.

There is no way that I would vote for him as president, a job that requires tough and important decisions to be made on a daily basis.

GENE GUFFEY
Schönau-Gebüg, Germany

The Hollywood Right

I never knew the men featured in Stephen F. Hayes's article "Hollywood Takes on the Left" (August 11 / 18) were conservative, but how could I?

An American Carol shouldn't be burdened by the hope of creating a sea change in perception. Rather, if it does well at the box office and encourages sincere thinking, I believe it will be successful. I hope for the best for all of the people associated with the film. I'll vote for them with my wallet.

DAVID SHOWS
Columbia, Miss.

Attacking Big Business

I'm encouraged by Senator McCain's changing opinion on drilling as reported by Stephen F. Hayes ("To Drill, or Not to Drill," August 25).

What enrages me about McCain, though, is that he says he associates with independent California petroleum producers because "they're not ExxonMobil."

He displays what I see as a disdain for big business. But, does he complain about the fabrics made for pilots that come from DuPont? DuPont is huge. I bet big Kevlar doesn't get complaints from McCain, either.

BRETT BUTLER
Springfield, Ill.

• • •

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Thanks, Guys

The editors of The Weekly Standard believe in giving credit where credit is due. The presidential race looks a whole lot better today than it did two weeks ago. For this, thanks are owed to two men—Barack Obama and John McCain—and to that herd of independent minds, the liberal media.

First: Thank you, Barack Obama. He lacked the confidence or the strength to ask Hillary Clinton, recipient of some 18 million votes, to join him on the ticket. Such a ticket, uniting and exciting the Democratic party, would have been hard to beat in this Democratic year. Having ruled out Clinton, Obama then lacked the nerve to double down on the theme of change, by selecting, say, Virginia governor Tim Kaine or Kansas governor Kathleen Sebelius. A change versus experience election wouldn't have been a bad bet for Obama. Instead, he settled on an unimpressive vice presidential pick, a long-time, long-winded overrated senator from a safe state, who gave him no lift at all in the polls, and offers no prospect of doing so.

Second: Thank you, John McCain. He showed guts with his pick of Sarah Palin. He also demonstrated a shrewd strategic sense. He knew that running on experience would carry him only so far—most likely to a respectable defeat. He understood the implications of Obama's passing over Hillary—not that Clinton voters would vote for McCain-Palin (though if even a few do so, it could make a difference), but that his pick of Palin when compared with Obama's shying away from Hillary would show McCain as a bolder and more confident leader. And he had the sense that Palin's anti-establishment conservatism, pro-family feminism, and tough-minded reformism would add something important to his campaign.

Third: A special thank you to our friends in the liberal media establishment. Who knew they would come through so spectacularly? The ludicrous media feeding frenzy about the Palin family hyped interest in her speech, enabling her to win a huge audience for her smashing success Wednesday night at the convention. Indeed, it even renewed interest in McCain, who seems to have gotten still more viewers for his less smashing—but well-received—presentation the following evening.

The astounding (even to me, after all these years!) smugness and mean-spiritedness of so many in the media engendered not just interest in but sympathy for Palin. It allowed Palin to speak not just to conservatives but to the many Americans who are repulsed by the media's prurient interest in and adolescent snickering about her family. It allowed the McCain-Palin ticket to become the populist standard-bearer against an Obama-Media ticket that has disdain for Middle America.

By the end of the week, after Palin's tour de force in St. Paul, the liberal media were so befuddled that they were reduced to complaining that conservatives aren't being narrow-minded enough. Thus, Hanna Rosin—who has covered religion and politics for the *Washington Post*, and has also written for the *New Yorker*, the *New Republic*, and the *New York Times*—lamented in a piece for *Slate*: "So cavalier are conservatives about Sarah Palin's wreck of a home life that they make the rest of us look stuffy and slow-witted by comparison." I suppose it was ungenerous of conservatives, in our broad-mindedness and tolerance of human frailty, to have let Ms. Rosin down, just when she was counting on us to bring out the tar and feathers. But she gives us too much credit when she suggests we make the liberal media look stuffy and slow-witted. They do that all by themselves.

For instance, what in the world can she be thinking when she refers to "Sarah Palin's wreck of a home life"? The only "domestic irregularities" (to use Ms. Rosin's loaded term) she cites are "two difficult pregnancies—Palin's with a Down syndrome baby and now her unmarried teenage daughter's." The second of these is a situation that the young woman and her family seem to be dealing with appropriately by their own lights. "Bristol and the young man she will marry are going to realize very quickly the difficulties of raising a child, which is why they will have the love and support of our entire family," the Palins said. But what is "irregular" about bringing to term a Down syndrome child? Is Rosin suggesting—without having the courage to say so—that Mrs. Palin should have aborted the baby? Is it upsetting to her to have a prominent woman choose not to do so?

Some may think we should also thank Sarah Palin for coming through, under pressure, with flying colors. But we're looking forward to expressing those thanks personally, at the vice presidential residence here in Washington.

—*William Kristol*

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McCain Finds the Right Wingman

And she's a woman.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Minneapolis

Last Tuesday, as the hordes of media that had begun to dissect every moment of her political career and personal life were distracted by speeches from Fred Thompson and Joe Lieberman in nearby St. Paul, Sarah Palin sat quietly with her family for an hourlong dinner in the Skywater restaurant of the Minneapolis Hilton. It was a rare respite from the intense scrutiny she was subjected to over the first week of her new life in the national spotlight.

Over the previous several days she had been portrayed as a naïf, a rube, and a bad mother. Journalists had peppered the McCain campaign with legitimate questions about her experience and her record as governor. But these same news organizations—including some of the world's most prestigious—devoted much of their time to exploring irrelevant aspects of her personal and family life.

One television network showed a family picture of the Palins with the belly of Palin's pregnant daughter Bristol spotlighted. Another showed several high school pictures of Bristol Palin's boyfriend, Levi. In the fourth paragraph of a front-page *New York Times* story we learned that Palin's husband, Todd, had been arrested on DUI charges in 1986. A writer for the *Atlantic Monthly* hyped an unfounded *Desperate Housewives*-type rumor that Palin's last child, Trig, was actually her daughter's. A major U.S. newspaper demanded the McCain campaign share medical records relating to Palin's amniotic fluid.

There were erroneous reports that Palin had supported Pat Buchanan's presidential campaign (she supported Steve Forbes), that she had been a member of the Alaska Independence Party (she hadn't), and that she had "slashed" funding for Alaska's special needs children (she had increased it).

Top McCain staffers were in the uncomfortable position of having to make decisions about which of the reports to take to Palin and which ones to ignore. She'd had to answer detailed questions about her personal life in the paperwork she filled out during the (expedited) vetting process, so McCain advisers assumed that they would have already known if there were truth to rumors about her family members and her background. Some felt that she should know as much as possible about the charges being made against her so she could help in quickly knocking them down. Others worried that raising sensitive issues one after another would distract her from the all-important convention speech she would give Wednesday night.

Some of it was unavoidable. Palin was told about the *US Weekly* cover that read "Babies, Lies & Scandal," and was well aware that the tabloid reporting had gone well beyond the tabloid media. But for the most part, Palin spent her time in Minneapolis hunkered down with the speechwriter Matthew Scully, a veteran of the Bush White House as well as the 1996 Dole campaign and Dan Quayle's vice-presidential office. When I told Mark Salter, McCain's longtime aide and speechwriter, that I'd heard Palin spent several hours with Scully writing and rewriting her speech, he corrected me: "Hours and hours and hours and hours." The broad framework of the speech was Scully's and much of the language about McCain and Obama had been in the draft he had written before knowing who would be delivering it. But Palin talked Scully through her recent career, made changes to the text, and added passages. "No one knows their own record like a candidate," says a senior McCain adviser involved in prepping Palin.

After the Tuesday dinner with her family, Palin headed upstairs for a full rehearsal of her speech—wanting to deliver it at approximately the same time of night that she would be giving it at the convention. It was one of several run-throughs.

When McCain arrived in Minneapolis on Wednesday, he stopped by the campaign war room and spoke to his staff. "They're not doing right by our vice president, they're not doing right by the American people," McCain said, according to a source in the room. "We're gonna fight back, we're gonna get 'em." McCain pounded his fist into his hand as he spoke, the source said, and made it clear that he would be aggressively challenging those who are attacking Palin.

Going into the speech, McCain aides felt good. They had watched many hours of tape from speeches Palin had given in her race for governor and in office. "We were a little nervous to see what she actually did," says a senior McCain adviser, "but we were very confident."

The five-day saturation coverage of all things Palin made her acceptance speech a highly anticipated national event. An estimated 37 million people tuned in to see what she would say and how she was holding up. It was nearly the same number of Americans who watched Barack Obama six days earlier, in a speech that had received three months of buildup.

Stephen F. Hayes, a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *is the author of* Cheney: The Untold Story of America's Most Powerful and Controversial Vice President *(HarperCollins).*

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JASON SEILER

Palin focused on Americans who live and work in small towns, on the blue-collar workers who love their country and hate Washington politicians. It was like hundreds of other speeches from this presidential race—stretching back two years to the earliest rhetoric from both Republican and Democrat candidates—except in one very important respect.

As she put it: "I grew up with those people."

> They are the ones who do some of the hardest work in America, who grow our food, and run our factories and fight our wars.
>
> They love their country, in good times and bad, and they're always proud of America. I had the privilege of living most of my life in a small town.
>
> I was just your average hockey mom and signed up for the PTA—

The Michigan delegation—all wearing hockey jerseys—went crazy, and some held up "Hockey Moms for Palin" signs. She stopped for a moment and improvised: "I love those hockey moms. You know, they say the difference between a hockey mom and a Pit Bull? Lipstick."

The crowd roared.

> So I signed up for the PTA because I wanted to make my kids' public education better.
>
> When I ran for city council, I didn't need focus groups and voter profiles because I knew those voters, and I knew their families, too.

And those voters, Palin noted, like small town voters across the country, worry that politicians are all alike—that they're inauthentic and insincere and will say whatever it takes to get elected.

> Before I became governor of the great state of Alaska, I was mayor of my hometown.
>
> And since our opponents in this presidential election seem to look down on that experience, let me explain to them what the job involves.
>
> I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a "community organizer," except that you have actual responsibilities. I might add that in small towns, we don't quite know what to make of a candidate who lavishes praise on working people when they are listening, and then talks about how bitterly they cling to their religion

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and guns when those people aren't listening.

We tend to prefer candidates who don't talk about us one way in Scranton and another way in San Francisco.

As for my running mate, you can be certain that wherever he goes, and whoever is listening, John McCain is the same man. I'm not a member of the permanent political establishment. And I've learned quickly, these past few days, that if you're not a member in good standing of the Washington elite, then some in the media consider a candidate unqualified for that reason alone.

But here's a little news flash for all those reporters and commentators: I'm not going to Washington to seek their good opinion. I'm going to Washington to serve the people of this country. Americans expect us to go to Washington for the right reasons, and not just to mingle with the right people.

REUTERS / RICK WILKING

In a race that sometimes feels like little more than a contest to see which side will be most closely associated with "change," this was a big moment. With three senators on the two tickets, Palin offered herself as spokesman for the rest of the country and, in effect, vouched for McCain's regular-guy credentials. "It felt like watching a pilot in the storm. Sure, she had navigational help and a good crew but she took control at the beginning and the landing proved it," said Tucker Eskew, a veteran of the 2000 campaign and the Bush White House, who is now working for Palin. "She owned that speech."

As Palin spoke, Scully stood on the floor of the convention hall, holding his laptop and a rolled-up McCain-Palin sign. He nervously fingered the sign and glanced up at the press section to gauge the reaction to Palin's most cutting and dramatic lines, not knowing that he would shortly be the focus of the response from the Obama campaign.

"The speech that Governor Palin gave was well delivered, but it was written by George Bush's speechwriter and sounds exactly like the same divisive, partisan attacks we've heard from George Bush for the last eight years. If Gov. Palin and John McCain want to define 'change' as voting with George Bush 90 percent of the time, that's their choice, but we don't think the American people are ready to take a 10 percent chance on change," said Bill Burton, Obama campaign spokesman.

The statement said more about the Obama campaign's inability to respond to Palin than it did about Palin.

Jim VandeHei and John Harris, top editors at *Politico*, which does as much to shape conventional wisdom these days as the *New York Times*, had initially called McCain's pick of Palin "desperate." After the speech, they wrote that while the pick was "risky . . . in the space of one 36-minute speech by Palin, McCain proved that his choice was not a lapse into temporary (or even permanent) insanity."

A longtime McCain adviser points to the Palin selection as one of two "pivot points" in McCain's run for the presidency. The first came when he rejected his campaign team's advice to move away from his support of the war in Iraq in the summer of 2007.

With the nomination in hand, McCain decided that he wanted his vice-presidential selection to be bold and leaned toward picking Joe Lieberman. But after an extensive look at the practical realities of selecting Lieberman and listening to the arguments for and against taking that dramatic step, McCain realized it wouldn't work. He turned his sights to three other candidates: Tim Pawlenty, Mitt Romney, and Sarah Palin. Romney was always a default candidate, but never a likely pick. Pawlenty had several backers among McCain's top advisers and, though McCain likes Pawlenty, he saw the pick as too conventional. There was a bold if risky choice remaining: Sarah Palin.

McCain had been impressed by Palin during a 15-minute conversation back in February and spoke to her again on August 24. She did not have a strong advocate among McCain's top advisers, and more than one cautioned him about the risks of picking someone with such limited experience. And as he had on Iraq, McCain listened to that advice, considered the politically safe choice, and then rejected it in favor of something bolder and riskier.

The early results have been promising, and McCain's team is confident that she will be a major asset over the next two months.

"You do not get to 80 percent approval by not being a good politician," said a senior McCain adviser. "I don't care how red your state is or how blue it is—if it's Alaska or California—you don't get to 80 percent without being good."

Palin will spend much of her time over the next eight weeks in small towns in battleground states. McCain advisers believe that the overwhelming media coverage over her first week has made her quite a draw and that average Americans will flock to someone who represents their sensibilities and their views.

She grew up with them. ♦

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A Party of Mavericks

Can there be such a thing?

BY FRED BARNES

St. Paul

When Representative Kevin McCarthy of California introduced the Republican platform to the party's convention last week, he had this to say: "Yes, we are a party of mavericks." The next night, a video extolling Ronald Reagan was screened with the disclosure that Reagan had been a maverick. And in his speech accepting the Republican presidential nomination, John McCain mentioned in passing that he'd been called a maverick, too. "Sometimes it's meant as a compliment and sometimes it's not," he noted.

One thing it's never meant as, though, is a coherent set of political ideas or a strategy for governing. Nor is there a maverick ideology that might compete with conservatism or liberalism or even libertarianism. If there were, we'd have heard a good bit about the virtues of maverickism during the four days of the convention.

Of course we didn't. And the reason is that, in politics, a maverick merely suggests someone with a certain attitude and image or, as McCain put it, "someone who marches to the beat of his own drum." Indeed he's just such a person, McCain said. "I don't work for a party," he declared. McCain said this right after accepting the Republican party's presidential nomination "with gratitude, humility, and confidence."

As far as I could tell, no one at the convention or in the Republican hierarchy or in Congress was bothered by this contradiction. Yet having as president and head of the Republican party someone who proudly strays from party orthodoxy or ignores the party entirely—that's a recipe for difficulties in Washington. And Sarah Palin wouldn't be ready to offer immediate help. As governor she's clashed with Republicans in Alaska as frequently as McCain has with Republicans on Capitol Hill.

> Without near-unanimous backing by Republicans in Congress, McCain's two top priorities would be doomed: reform of spending practices, including deep cuts, and an aggressive foreign and national security policy. He will need Republicans and some renegade Democrats on board.

If the McCain-Palin ticket loses, the governing problem will vanish. Congressional Republicans will be on their own. But if McCain wins—and his chances improved considerably when he chose Palin as his vice presidential running mate—he'll have a tricky task to accomplish. As a Republican president facing a hostile Democratic Congress, McCain would need Senate and House Republicans as reliable allies. And most of them, by the way, aren't mavericks.

President Bush was confronted with exactly this circumstance—Democratic control of Congress—after the election of 2006. Without solid Republican backing in the Senate, his controversial troop surge that has turned around the situation in Iraq would have been jeopardized or halted altogether. Though many Republican senators were wary of his Iraq policy, Bush kept their support in part by accommodating them on other issues, such as earmarks.

Should McCain try to impose his every wish on congressional Republicans, he'd risk alienating them. If he brushed them aside in pursuit of bipartisan compromises with Democrats, that would make matters worse. It would split Republicans and wipe out hopes of a full recovery by the party from its collapse two years ago.

According to a former Bush administration official who worked closely with congressional Republicans, McCain would begin his White House term with "less good will and felt loyalty" among members of his own party than any president in memory. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, for instance, once referred to McCain as a "bridge burner." That's not a compliment.

But without near-unanimous backing by Republicans in Congress, McCain's two top priorities would be doomed: reform of spending practices, including deep cuts, and an aggressive foreign and national security policy. "I will cut government spending," McCain said in his acceptance speech. Only with Republicans and some renegade Democrats on board would he be able to keep that promise, however, since the vast majority of Democrats would reject a pared-down McCain budget out of hand.

Eric Cantor, the deputy Republican whip in the House, believes President McCain would implement an "ideology of accountability," acting "like a sledgehammer" to get rid of unneeded or unjustified spending. Democrats would not only object strenuously to that sort of budget process, they'd attempt to block it.

Imagine what Democrats thought when they heard McCain last week boast of "having fought the big

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spenders" as a senator and vow to fight them all the more vigorously as president. They must have figured he was talking about them, and he was. Again, to prevent Democrats from gutting his plans, McCain would need Republicans on his side, lots of them.

Courting many of the same Republicans he's been infuriating for years wouldn't be easy. McCain would have to give up some of his cherished goals, including a total ban on earmarks and the defunding of every subsidy for business.

Perhaps the maverick problem is already being taken care of. Kevin McCarthy thinks so. McCain the reformer, he says, "understands he can't walk alone. He's learned the lesson that he can go further when the party's with him." Or when he's with the party.

McCarthy's examples are energy and immigration. By adopting the Republican call for offshore drilling for oil and gas, McCain has given himself a powerful talking point against Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama. By backing away from support for sweeping immigration reform in favor of the party's position of securing the border with Mexico first, he's avoided alienating hordes of conservative voters.

But these were campaign compromises, necessary for him to win the Republican nomination and now the general election. Republicans shouldn't count on McCain's willingness to jettison his non-Republican position on environmental issues. To keep their ties with McCain secure, they probably will have to yield on those. McCain, after all, has promised to reach at least some bipartisan solutions.

Running for president as a maverick is fine, so long as McCain recognizes there's no such thing as a maverick political party. I suspect he does. A maverick, by definition, is an animal without a brand. A political party requires one. Chances are, a President McCain who worked with congressional Republicans would improve the brand of the GOP. ♦

McCain and Lieberman in St. Paul, September 4

REUTERS / MIKE SEGAR

Axis of Honor

The McCain-Palin-Lieberman connection.

BY NOEMIE EMERY

As late as August 24, John McCain had reportedly not given up on the idea of putting his old friend Joe Lieberman on the Republican ticket, even though Lieberman is (a) still a Democrat, if a beleaguered one, (b) pro-choice, which would enrage and alienate some of the party's most loyal constituents, and (c) at odds with McCain and Republicans on a whole host of issues. (Lieberman has a rating of 8 from the American Conservative Union, McCain's is 80.)

McCain, inspired by Ronald Reagan to go into politics, has been established for almost 30 years as a center-right figure; Lieberman, inspired in a similar way by John Kennedy (who in some ways now seems not that far from Reagan, especially when compared with most modern-day Democrats) is firmly on the center-left. When told by advisers that his party would rebel if asked to—uh—put an actual Democrat on the Republican ticket, McCain pivoted and picked Sarah Palin, a woman beloved by the social-conservative wing of the party that has long looked on him with intense, and sometimes well-earned, suspicion.

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When this center-right pro-life Republican maverick went in a matter of days or perhaps even hours from a pro-choice Democrat to an exceedingly pro-life conservative heroine, it was called a cynical move, an unprincipled move, an incomprehensible move, even an "insulting" move to try to poach Hillary voters still boiling at the dismissive treatment of their heroine by Barack Obama. In fact, it was none of these things. It was simply McCain being true to his own inclinations. These are not those of most politicians. And they need to be judged on their own.

McCain's attitude toward picking his second is entwined in his problems with movement conservatives, with whom his relations have seldom been smooth. It's not that he is liberal, or has something against them: It's that they're living in two different worlds. They're talking French, and he's talking Spanish; they come for baseball,

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and he's playing football; they're playing poker, and he's playing craps. They live in a world of ideas, he of instinct; they prize coherence, he prizes courage; they prefer order, and staying on message, he enjoys mixing things up. Now and then, their interests converge and there is harmony; then they part ways, and there's strife.

From time to time, like marriage counselors or concerned friends of the family, various pundits have tried to mediate between the two, interpreting each to the other lest separation or divorce become final. "John McCain is not a normal conservative," wrote David Brooks in the *New York Times* on September 2.

> "He has instincts, but few abstract convictions. . . . He's a traditionalist, but is not energized by the social conservative agenda. . . . The main axis in McCain's worldview is not left-right. It's public service versus narrow self-interest. Throughout his career, he has been drawn to those crusades that enable him to launch frontal attacks on the concentrated powers of selfishness . . . big money donors who exploited the loose campaign finance system . . . corrupt Pentagon contractors . . . the earmark specialists in Congress like Alaska's Don Young and Ted Stevens."

In *National Review*, Yuval Levin takes it still further: "Conservatism is a movement of ideas, grounded in premises and theories that tend to be fairly close to the surface, and that directly inform the day to day political judgments conservatives make," he says, explaining why, in this sense, McCain is not one of them. "Indeed, [he] seems ill-suited to articulate and champion a positive ideology as conservatives generally understand the term. He is obviously devoted to his country and deeply committed to an ideal of honor . . . but beyond them he does not really seem to have a vision of what politics should aim to achieve . . . Conservatives fear John McCain because they assume he approaches politics the way most people do, and take his substantive views to express an underlying liberalism. That is certainly mistaken. McCain is neither a liberal nor quite a conservative. . . . McCain is an honor politician —aggressive in opposing corruption, hypersensitive to inauthenticity or dishonesty, addicted to big causes, essentially uninterested in what most conservatives take to be the substance of politics," which tends to tax-cutting, or family-values crusades.

McCain believes in small government and he is pro-life, or rather he prefers these views to their opposite numbers, and he can be relied on to back them. But the singular passion that a Grover Norquist pours into tax cuts, or a right to life activist pours into his movement, is channeled in McCain's case into the concept of honor, and to the "big causes" that often transcend party politics. At this time, his "big causes" are war and peace—national defense, national security, the war in Iraq, and the larger war on terror—and domestic reform, i.e., corruption and spending. These concerns led him to Palin and Lieberman, who are the twins of the two halves of his politics.

Lieberman is his twin on the war, Palin his twin on domestic affairs, which to him means clean government. This is why he could pair with either quite neatly, though they differ with him (and with each other) on any number of issues. In McCain's view, these issues are of lesser or no consequence. This may not make sense by a normal political calculus. But he is not your normal political animal.

A conviction figure, a man of honor who takes huge risks on behalf of his causes and values—in Vietnam, and in risking his political career on the surge when the Iraq war seemed most hopeless—McCain finds kindred spirits in those who do likewise.

Palin made her chops battling the powers that be in Alaska, among them her party's most powerful figures. As for Lieberman, it is likely that McCain's attachment to him has only been strengthened by the abuse Lieberman took from his own party for his refusal to go along quietly with its plans to give up in Iraq. No one, not even George W. Bush, has been attacked with more visceral hate than the left wing of his party showed to the renegade Connecticut senator, who has been assailed as a sell-out, a Quisling, a war criminal, and "Joe Lieberman (Traitor-CT)," to give only the printable epithets.

Two years ago, Lieberman drew a primary challenge, and when he lost narrowly on August 9, 2006, saw friends of 10 and 20 years' standing desert him for millionaire Ned Lamont, cut checks to his rival, and urge him, for the good of the party, to drop out of the race. Instead, Lieberman ran and won as an independent, and at the end of 2006 was one of the few senators, along with McCain, to back the surge energetically, voting with Republicans to cut off the Democrats' efforts to force an end to the conflict. This did not endear him to the rest of his caucus, which did not bother to hide its hostility. Being insulted by Chris Dodd is not in the same class as being tortured by Communist prison guards, but McCain nonetheless regards Lieberman as a fellow survivor, willing to bear pain and take risks on behalf of his principles.

As for Palin, the conventional view was that she was picked in an identity-based play for Hillary voters, but, while her sex was a bonus, this wasn't remotely the whole story. It helped that she was a woman, with appeal in the Mountain West, and to blue-collar voters, but in the end she was picked as a maverick, a fellow crusader, a defier of the Republican establishment who could reinforce McCain's main brand.

"When McCain met Sarah Palin . . . he was meeting the rarest of creatures, an American politician who sees the world as he does," as Brooks put it. "She lit up every pattern in McCain's brain, because she seems so much like himself." It was not such an odd thing that Palin and Lieberman should have been McCain's favorites in the end. They are the Three Musketeers, an Axis of Rebels, with different ideas but a shared concept of integrity and honor, who see public life as a great western movie.

Can honor sell? Not that many Americans are obsessed with ideological purity. Honor appeals across lines of race, class, and gender. Politicians come and go, and few are remembered. But everybody remembers *High Noon*. ♦

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Punishing Russia

A how-to guide.

BY GARY SCHMITT

"The first order of business should not be some sort of punishment," said Dan Fried, the Bush administration's assistant secretary of state for European affairs, in an interview this past week about U.S. policy toward Russia in the wake of its invasion of Georgia.

Fried is an accomplished Foreign Service officer who has served this and previous administrations loyally and professionally, and undoubtedly he is working with the instructions given to him by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and National Security Adviser Steve Hadley. But, in this case, the sentiment is dead wrong and only reinforces the worst tendencies in the key alliance capitals of Paris and Berlin.

Up to now, the transatlantic policy toward the Russian aggression in the Caucasus has been to offer aid and assistance to Georgia but avoid any steps that might be viewed as a substantive sanction in Moscow. It is the equivalent of coming across a victim of a violent mugging and robbery and offering to help the victim but doing nothing when it comes to punishing the actual perpetrator of the crime. Helping the victim, of course, is important, but that alone will not deter the mugger. Indeed, absent punishment, the mugger is only likely to grow bolder and deterrence even less sustainable.

Complicating matters is that Washington is not the sole judge in this matter. To make any punishment effective will require the cooperation of America's transatlantic allies—and right now, key allies, such as France and Germany, are actively stalling efforts to make Putin and company pay a price for Russian misbehavior. And since both the European Union and NATO operate on the basis of consensus, it is especially difficult to move forward when those two states are blocking the way.

Difficult, but not impossible.

The first step is to make clear that the German and French approach is not working. Moscow is not keeping even its minimal promises agreed to in the French-brokered ceasefire. If anything, with its de jure recognition of the independence of both Abkhazia and South Ossetia and de facto absorption of the two into Russia, Moscow has made a mockery of Paris's efforts. Nor, stepping back, has Berlin's policy of commercial engagement with Russia been shown to gain it any special leverage over Russian behavior. Worried most of all about its supplies of gas and oil from Russian pipelines, Berlin has blinked. For Germany and France, two states that want to (and should) play a bigger role on the world stage, Russia's blatant disregard of their concerns should be sufficiently humiliating to spur a reappraisal of their policies, one would think.

Of course that reappraisal is likelier to happen under pressure. And the best source of that pressure is from other European governments who live on Russia's doorstep. Sweden, the Baltic States, and Poland have all argued for taking a tougher line with Moscow—and they should continue to do so. It is precisely because NATO and the European Union operate by consensus that these frontline states have the ability to push their neighbors to the west in the right direction. This is especially true of the EU, where their potential unwillingness to cooperate on other issues of importance to France and Germany gives Warsaw, Tallinn, and the other capitals leverage they might not otherwise have.

With the EU-Ukraine summit scheduled for September 9—whose outcome on closer ties between the two is very much in doubt because of German objections—it is important that these cards begin to be played today, not a year from now. A weak agreement will send just another signal to Moscow that it has a veto power when it comes to defining relations with the countries in its "near abroad."

If recent history is any guide, it will ultimately be up to an American administration to develop a transatlantic plan to make Moscow understand that there is a price to be paid for ransacking and carving up Georgia. The obvious starting point is the Russian economy, a one-note Johnny. Minus oil and gas revenues, there is little good news on the Russian economic front. The Moscow stock market is in decline and foreign investment and capital are fleeing in the face of Putin's heavy hand internally and externally.

But Russia needs foreign investment and technology, especially in developing its own oil and gas supplies. Publicly denying Russia membership in the WTO and the OECD may seem mostly symbolic, but it can put a serious hitch in potential investors' steps when it comes to plans for sinking cash into Russian firms or markets. Playing hardball on that front, as well as making Russian companies' access to world credit lines more difficult, could turn the recent decline into something far more serious for the Kremlin to worry about.

Russia does have resources we need, but a tit-for-tat response can only increase the underlying fragility of the Russian economy and is not sustainable for any length of time. Unlike the Soviet Union, today's Russia cannot simply hunker down in a totalitarian snit.

Moscow can also be squeezed by the threat of moving the 2014 winter Olympic games from Sochi, Russia, to some other site. There is no need to boycott the games since there is still plenty of time to find an alternative location. If nothing else, an embarrassment of this sort would put a big wet cloth over Putin's neofascist,

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strongman strut that the world now bends to Russia.

In short, making Moscow pay a price for its actions—and potentially creating divisions within its leadership as a result—is not impossible, nor does it necessarily involve a hard-power show of force. There are plenty of soft-power tools at hand around which a transatlantic approach can be fashioned. And, indeed, if Washington and Europe want to avoid having to resort to more drastic measures down the road, it is important to use these and other points of leverage sooner than later. ♦

Biden's One Accomplishment

Will the Democrats bring up crime this fall?

BY ELI LEHRER

When Joe Biden has taken an interest in domestic policy, it has mostly had to do with crime. Of the 31 substantive domestic policy bills the Democratic vice presidential nominee has introduced since 2006, 20 related to crime and policing. His single most significant legislative achievement—one that Barack Obama singled out in his remarks introducing Biden as his running mate—remains the massive 1994 crime bill.

Not surprisingly, Biden's the go-to guy on Capitol Hill for many of America's police leaders. "More than just about anyone else, he really gets it," says Providence, Rhode Island, police chief Dean Esserman. "He really does care about cops."

Although street crime—which played a key role in every presidential election from 1960 to 1992—has disappeared from the political radar in recent years, the Delaware Democrat's legislative record shows a wonkish interest in just about everything related to policing. Before the 1994 crime bill, he led efforts to create the Office of National Drug Control Policy (aka the Drug Czar) and to advance the Reagan administration's priorities for drug enforcement. More recently, he pushed a big increase for federal funding for local police departments through the Senate.

The choice of Biden, with his long record of legislative accomplishment on crime, indicates that perhaps the issue may again be a popular theme of the Democratic party and that we might see a resurgence in Democratic support from police groups, who helped burnish Bill Clinton's centrist credentials in 1992.

The 1994 Biden crime bill, officially called the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, created grants to put 100,000 more police officers on the streets, offered billions for prison construction, initiated new programs to combat violence against women, enacted many new criminal laws (including new federal death penalty offenses), and expanded federal control over firearms.

The bill had a lot to recommend it, and police loved it. During the 1994 electoral cycle, conservatives made political hay out of the crime bill's "assault weapons" ban and the few million dollars it devoted to midnight basketball programs for troubled youth. But the bulk of the bill, actually, took its cues from the conservatives' crime-fighting handbook: more police to catch criminals, more prisons to lock them up, and harsher sentences (including death) to protect society.

And it worked. Starting in the mid-1990s, police ranks increased much faster than the population, room was made for hundreds of thousands of new prisoners, and crime fell dramatically. Indeed, with the exception of a slight uptick right after 9/11, overall crime as measured by the FBI has fallen almost continuously since 1993. (Violent crime rose in 2005 and 2006.)

Still, it's hard to tease out the 1994 law's specific impact. "The prison money really got lost in state budgets. A lot of the investments would have happened anyway," says Chicago attorney John Schmidt, who oversaw the programs as associate attorney general during the Clinton administration.

The enormous boost in federal spending on police—through the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants—probably had the greatest impact as it increased police manpower by about 15 percent. (Studies dispute the actual effect.)

What the COPS grants certainly did was to stimulate police innovation. Edward Davis—now police commissioner in Boston—oversaw a 50 percent drop in crime in Lowell, Massachusetts. "We just couldn't have done it without the COPS grants," he says. "That's what made the difference." Innovating police chiefs in cities around the country found their priorities funded. Unlike the formula grants the Bush administration has pushed and distribute money mostly on the basis of population, COPS grants were reviewed by expert panels to make sure that the extra funding went to the best police agencies.

"The personnel and the money mattered but the idea of federal leadership—and the innovation—that mattered just as much," says Laurie Robinson, who headed the Office of Justice Programs under the Clinton administration. And Biden deserves credit for the program's specifics. "When Clinton was talking about 100,000 new police officers, he wasn't talking much about community policing. It was mostly Biden who started that," says Schmidt.

If COPS proved a success, two other major features of Biden's bill—

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gun control and greater federal intrusion into common crime—didn't.

Biden's "assault weapons ban," for example, didn't change the law on military-issue machine guns—private citizens already couldn't buy them—but instead outlawed a number of features like folding stocks and "pistol grips." Even gun-control supporters admit this had no impact on crime. (The law lapsed in 2004.)

Biden's attempts to bring common crime into federal courts also proved misplaced. Although largely a piece of commonsense, good-government legislation, the "Violence Against Women Act" section of the 1994 crime bill allowed federal civil suits against anyone accused of "gender motivated violence" if the underlying offense went unprosecuted. In 2000, the Supreme Court concluded that Biden's legislation went too far in contending that gender-related attacks belonged in federal court because they constituted "interstate commerce."

Although it revives some of the good ideas from his 1994 bill—federal leadership on policing and competitive grants—parts of Biden's current agenda seem silly. He has proposed federal criminal laws relating to computer hackers, prescription-drug abusers, drug smugglers who use submarines, and intellectual property pirates. Biden is proposing outlawing things it is already almost impossible to do without breaking an existing federal law and which in some cases (prescription drug abuse) rightly belong in the hands of state and local police.

In the end, however, there's little doubt that Biden can draw on significant law enforcement support and, perhaps, transfer his law enforcement credibility to the Democratic ticket. As Chuck Wexler, who heads the Police Executive Research Forum—a research group for police chiefs—notes: "He's always been there. He always shows up. We don't endorse anybody but we do recognize when somebody has demonstrated a consistency on the drug issue, the crime issue, and the importance of policing for the great part of a long career." ♦

Tax Cuts, Real and Imaginary

Obama's spending programs in disguise.

BY NEWT GINGRICH & PETER FERRARA

Thirty years of Republican tax policy have now completely eliminated federal income taxes on the poor and lower middle-income Americans, and almost eliminated them on middle America.

The latest data from the Congressional Budget Office and the Internal Revenue Service show that the lowest 40 percent of income earners as a group actually *receive* net payments from the federal income tax system. (They get 3.8 percent of total federal income tax revenues instead of paying any income taxes.) The middle 20 percent of income earners pay 4.4 percent of federal income taxes. Thus the bottom 60 percent of income earners together, on net, pay less than 1 percent of all federal income taxes. (These workers earn 26 percent of national income.)

The data show that the top 1 percent of income earners now pay 40 percent of all federal income taxes, which is almost double their share of the national income. The top 10 percent pay 71 percent of federal income taxes, though they earn just 39 percent of the nation's pretax income.

This is a result of the across the board income tax rate cuts adopted by Ronald Reagan and the current President Bush, plus the Earned Income Tax Credit first proposed by Reagan in the 1970s, and the child tax credit enacted into law as part of the 1994 Contract With America.

Barack Obama claims to be proposing income tax cuts for low and moderate income and middle class workers, but Reagan Republicans have already eliminated most of their income tax liability. What Obama is calling tax cuts for the middle class is really a slew of refundable federal income tax credits that would primarily go to those who are paying little or no federal income taxes now. Such credits would primarily not reduce tax liability, but instead be checks from the federal government for child care, education, housing, retirement, health care, even outright giveaways. These are not tax cuts. They are new federal spending programs hidden in the tax code.

When Obama says that he will cut taxes for 95 percent of Americans, he is talking about his proposal for a $500 refundable income tax credit for all but the top 5 percent of income earners. For the bottom 40 percent of income earners, this will be just another check from the federal government rather than a reduction in tax liability. It is another sharp increase in government spending rather than any sort of tax cut. An arbitrary cash grant does not, moreover, do anything to improve the economy or incentivize productive business. That only comes from cutting tax rates. What Obama is proposing here is really quite similar to George McGovern's 1972 plan to send everyone a $1,000 check, which voters rightly saw as a crass vote-buying scheme rather than serious policy.

Obama also proposes to increase the top marginal tax rates for virtually every major federal tax. These increases would not come remotely close to financing the trillion dollars of increased direct federal spending Obama is promising—including a new

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national health insurance entitlement that would be bigger than any of the massive entitlement programs we already have and already have trouble paying for. Indeed, if the tax rate increases cause a serious enough economic decline, they will lose revenue on net.

Obama's plans are the opposite of tax reform. Instead of closing loopholes and lowering rates, he is creating new loopholes and raising rates.

REUTERS / LARRY RUBENSTEIN

But there is a real tax agenda that would benefit middle-America.

America has the second-highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world, with a federal rate of 35 percent—rising to 40 percent on average with income taxes. The average corporate tax rate in the European Union countries is 24 percent. Even India and China have lower corporate tax rates. Ireland adopted a 12.5 percent corporate tax rate 20 years ago. Since then per capita income has soared from the second-lowest in the EU to the second-highest.

John McCain is proposing to reduce our federal corporate tax rate to 25 percent. The top income tax rates borne by noncorporate small businesses and investors should be reduced to 25 percent as well. Obama is taking the opposite tack, calling for increases in the income tax rates that small businesses pay and additional tax increases for larger corporations (such as the so-called windfall profits tax on oil companies that would only further hurt the American economy with higher energy costs).

With two-thirds of the American people now owning stocks, capital gains taxes are another middle America issue. Obama proposes to increase the top capital gains tax rate by 33 percent, which will cause a decline in the value of stocks held by middle-income families. History has also proven, time and again, that rising capital gains tax rates cost the federal government money. From 1968 to 1975, the capital gains tax rate was raised four times, and capital gains tax revenue fell by more than 50 percent. When capital gains tax rates were raised by 40 percent as part of the compromise in the 1986 tax reform act, revenues fell by 40 percent the next year, and by 1991 they had fallen by 63 percent.

McCain is proposing to retain the current capital gains rate of 15 percent. But to maximize economic growth for working people and middle-income families, the capital gains tax rate should be zero. The capital gains tax is just another layer of taxation on capital income. It taxes the present discounted value of future income that will be taxed again—multiple times, in fact—when it is earned. That is not fairness or good economic sense. Many of our international competitors maintain a zero tax rate on capital gains—including 14 out of 30 OECD countries, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Eliminating the capital gains tax would cause the stocks held by two-thirds of the American people to soar in value.

The most important middle-income tax issue, however, is payroll taxes—the taxes withheld by your employer to pay for programs like Social Security and Medicare. The federal payroll tax is now the largest tax most workers pay. With federal income taxes already abolished for the poor and lower middle-income workers, and almost abolished for middle-income workers, the next big tax cut for these working people would be the ability to utilize personal accounts for Social Security.

Over time, personal accounts could expand to replace the entire payroll tax and finance the same benefits. Instead of paying a tax, working people would be saving and investing in their own personal family wealth engine. With fully expanded accounts, average families could expect to accumulate a million dollars or more, even while paying in about 25 percent less than the current 15.3 percent payroll tax. Such accounts are estimated to pay at least twice what Social Security currently promises and provide the only real hope of addressing the long-term funding problems of Medicare without harming retirees.

This would be nothing less than a revolution in the personal prosperity of working people. McCain at least favors starting such personal accounts. But, as is so typical of Barack Obama, he would just slam the door on a truly revolutionary change, and hark back to the stale ideas of the 1960s or even the 1930s. Obama's tax policies would take America in exactly the opposite direction of the tax reform and threaten economic disaster in already difficult times. ♦

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"Sarah Barracuda," No. 22, helps the Wasilla Warriors capture the state basketball championship in 1982

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Game Changer

Will the battle of 2008 turn out to have been won on the playing fields of Alaska?

By Jessica Gavora

"All I ever really needed to know I learned on the basketball court."

That's Sarah Palin, circa 2004, when she was merely, as the Obama campaign would say, "the former mayor of a town of 9,000 with zero foreign policy experience."

More than once on her way to becoming a national political phenom as John McCain's running mate, Palin has said she owes it all to playing hoops. But she's not just talking about basketball.

She's talking about *girls'* basketball.

In *Alaska*.

In the *seventies*.

It was a time and a place before identity politics. Before feminists made young female athletes the bright, shiny faces of their graying crusade; before Nike cut treacly, black and white commercials featuring sweaty and empowered young women; and before the law mandated that all six-year-old girls, regardless of race, color, creed, or total lack of interest, strap on shin guards and spend each and every Saturday kicking around a #3 soccer ball.

I know because I was there. While Sarah Palin was calling plays as point guard for the Wasilla Warriors, I was posting low as center for the West Valley Wolfpack, just a few hundred miles north in Fairbanks.

It was a different world. We didn't play basketball to pad our college applications or fulfill some bureaucrat's notion of "gender equity." We played because the winters were long and cold and dark. There was nothing else to do. Maybe as a result, basketball was deadly serious business. Away games were played at the end of eight-hour bus rides or harrowing plane landings in frozen, remote villages. Our opponents were tough, and the fans were unforgiving. And even though the law that feminists like to credit with all female athletic success, Title IX, was then unenforced in high school sports, we girls wouldn't have dreamed of taking second place to the boys—nor did we.

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS/MCT/LANDOV

Jessica Gavora, a native Alaskan, is a writer and speechwriter.

Palin earned her now-famous nickname on the hardcourt—"Sarah Barracuda." Her enemies have tried to belittle her by pointing to her stint as a beauty queen, but it is clear that Palin's background in sports, more than any other experience, is what has made her the existential threat to liberal feminism (and possibly the Democratic ticket) that she is today.

In a basketball-crazed state, Wasilla was and is a basketball-crazed town. Palin, the *Anchorage Daily News* wrote when she was running for governor, was "practically canonized" for her role on the 1982 state championship team. It is a story she repeated often to the Alaska media as she made her name in politics: The Wasilla Warrior girls were the underdogs coming into the state tournament that year. Nobody thought they could win. But they beat squads from much larger Anchorage schools to capture the big prize.

As a candidate in Alaska, Palin sold herself unselfconsciously as a chick jock. In one op-ed, she went out of her way to set herself apart, as chick jocks like to do, from the supporting actors who are nonetheless the highest link in the high-school-girl food chain: the cheerleaders. She has never, she wrote, "been coordinated, peppy or dramatic enough to have ever been on a pom-pom squad."

"I know this sounds hokey," she told an interviewer in 2006, "but basketball was a life-changing experience for me." The problem for today's feminists is that the life lessons Palin learned from basketball have made her their biggest nightmare.

Instead of turning her into a gender-obsessed, hair-trigger enemy of the patriarchy, basketball taught Palin a different set of virtues: To insist on equal opportunity, not equal results. To know herself and what she is capable of. And to never, ever see herself as a victim.

Like a good politician, Palin pays lip service to Title IX, but the law that she supports is Title IX as it was originally written—a grant of equal opportunity for girls and women—not the quota law it has become.

Instead of teaching her to view the world through

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the prism of gender, as feminists would have it, sports taught Palin the opposite lesson. "Sports taught me that gender isn't an issue," she said shortly after becoming governor. "In fact, when people talk about me being the first female governor, I'm a little absent from that discussion, because I've never thought of gender as an issue."

The modern feminist theory of girls and women in athletics is that we are all lingering victims—even in 2008—of the patriarchy. The theory explains away girls' and women's lower interest in athletics with the assertion that years of being shut out of athletics (never mind that the years in question were four decades ago) have conditioned females not to like sports as much as men. It's not that we don't like to play sports as much as the guys, it's just that we don't yet *know* that we like to play sports as much as the guys. We need to be educated about our interests, and it is the government's responsibility to ensure that schools create women's teams—and/or eliminate men's teams—until we come to our senses and behave just like the boys.

Palin takes this theory of the victimized female, prisoner of false-consciousness, and drives a stake through its heart. She didn't need anyone to teach her that she was an athlete back in the seventies, and she won't allow anyone to call her a token female today.

For all their talk of the sameness of the sexes, what feminists want for female athletes today is preferences, quotas mandated by the federal government and handed out by schools. But what Sarah Palin has achieved no one has given her; she has manifestly earned it.

It's difficult to overstate how entrenched—and how male—was the political culture that Palin upended in Alaska. The state's governing Republican troika of Senator Ted Stevens, Congressman Don Young, and Governor Frank Murkowski (known simply as Ted, Don, and Frank) together had more than a century on the public payroll—in a state less than 50 years old—when Palin challenged Murkowski in the Republican primary in 2006. For decades, they had relied on the not-unpersuasive argument that failing to return them to Washington would be fatal to a small state like Alaska with only three snouts in the federal trough.

But it turns out that playing basketball taught Sarah Palin the importance of a quality more valuable than seniority: competitiveness. Instead of shrinking before the political machine that was responsible for delivering billions of federal dollars to the residents whose votes she sought, Palin challenged it head on. Not content with exposing her own Republican party chairman for ethics violations, she defeated a sitting governor of her own party and called the FBI investigation of Stevens and others for official corruption an "embarrassment" to Alaska.

The future governor (No. 22) in action, 1982

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS/MCT/LANDOV

"Competition defines and refines a person," she wrote in 2004. "Character is revealed. It's really nothing to be afraid of."

But liberal feminists are, in fact, afraid of Sarah Palin. For the first time, they face real competition in their claim to speak for women. For decades, feminist groups have insisted they are the voice of American women, when in fact they are the voice of a narrow, liberal fringe. It's an argument that has convinced the media and has cowed politicians of both parties. And it's an argument that Sarah Palin is busy blowing clean out of the water.

If she wins, that hissing sound you will hear will be the air wheezing out of modern feminism. And even if she doesn't win, she will have given America—and, more important, American politicians—the example of a female former athlete who knows who she is and what she wants and doesn't need Big Brother to protect her from the old boys network.

And to think it all began in a gym in Wasilla. ♦

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Among the Paultards

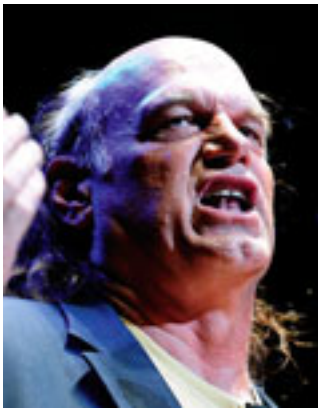
Even they are ashamed of their candidate's supporters

By Matt Labash

Minneapolis

While the press often considers the Ron Paul movement to be chock-full of cranks, wackos, and conspiracy theorists, I take a more nuanced view. For me, the Ron Paul Revolution is like a cozy winter fire. From a distance, the crackling flames of individual liberty and freethinking libertarianism take the chill off sterile two-party politics. But get too near the searing embers, and they will cause blistering, profuse sweating, and all-around general discomfort.

I've driven up to the Earle Brown Heritage Center, where leadership training is taking place for the Ron Paultards, as they are often called. The Texas Republican congressman's people have decided that, though the presidential primary is long over, the Paultardiness must go on. And so they have convened in Minneapolis, to conduct a three-day shadow convention, the capstone of which will be an all-day "Rally for the Republic." Though my Mapquest directions are sketchy, it's readily apparent I've arrived at the right place. The bumper stickers are the giveaway, saying things such as "I don't suffer from insanity, I enjoy every minute of it," and "My other car is a UFO."



Jesse Ventura

Tucker Carlson

PHOTOS: KEITH BEDFORD / BLOOMBERG NEWS / LANDOV

More than 10,000 have made the Paul pilgrimage, arriving by plane, train, and "Ronvoy" caravans. Some stay in hotels, others under the stars at "Ronstock," which is being held in the middle of a farmer's pasture somewhere on the outskirts of town. (Attendees say it's like Woodstock, but with wi-fi connections instead of free love.) Or else they'll stay out at Camp Iduhapi, which, when I later stop by, I learn is the Lakota word for "campers who have unsafe amounts of political signage in their car windows." It's a testament to Paul's drawing power, considering he's no longer running for anything. To find this many people who've ever been this excited about John McCain, you'd have to go back to his press bus in the year 2000.

In the parking lot, I encounter Caitanya Dasa, a 15-year-old with braces who is getting something out of a van. It's the "Liberty Van," which is painted on the back of the Chevy Venture, along with "Truth is Treason In the Empire of Lies."

"That's a quote from Paul's book, *The Revolution: A Manifesto*," Dasa helpfully explains. He's in from Oregon after a 36-hour, near-sleepless trek with several people rotating driving duties, including his mom. Along the way, a swarm of gnats infiltrated their van, they were attacked by bees, and they ran over an entire bumper on the interstate. But it was worth the sacrifice. Because Ron Paul is here. "We were standing in the food line! And he comes up to us, and says, 'That looks pretty good!'" a breathless Dasa exclaims. "None of us knew what to say."

Dasa wastes no time in taking me to his leader. Behind the building, on the well-manicured grounds, there is indeed a buffet of bear claws, sticky buns, melon wedges, and fresh-squeezed juices. But Paul is the main attraction, standing there, having snap after snap taken by a photographer with a long line of admirers that he mows down one by one. He's like one of those Shaquille O'Neal cardboard cutouts you can have your picture taken with at the mall. Except Ron Paul is right here, in the flesh, right down to his black referee shoes.

I talk to the Oregon delegation waiting for my audience with Dr. Paul, the former obstetrician. Like most of the Paultards, and unlike most of the mainstream Republicans who are wringing their hands over whether to press on with their convention with Hurricane Gustav bearing down on the Gulf states, they are not going to let somebody else's bad weather get in the way of their gathering. "There's suf-

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Ventura has the crowd ululating, and then he gets down to business, to a little 'something called 9/11.' It's like lighting a match around the double-knits. They ignite.

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fering all over every single day," one tells me. "So if I skip the sticky bun, the world would be better?"

Paul takes all comers, as he will at a Borders book-signing later that day, where I'm told he signs for no less than a thousand people. As I get a crack at him, he seems bemused by Republican skittishness over Gustav, and smells a rat. "They might've been looking for an excuse not to have the president speak," he says, "but I wouldn't accuse them of that. I've heard people say that."

He generally likes Sarah Palin, though is skeptical of her signing up with such a pro-war team. "When Bill Kristol says he loves her, it makes me wonder," he says. Since he knows my affiliation, I give Paul points for honesty. Then he hits me with a little more: "I wanna get [our interview] over with, because I wanna go eat breakfast." Like Dasa before me, I don't know what to say. "Try the sticky buns," I offer.

After breakfast, I settle into the invitation-only Leadership Summit with Dasa, who's not supposed to be there himself on account of being underage ("The side door works great," he says). The summit is to highlight the particulars of Paul's new permanent organization, the Campaign for Liberty, the mission of which is to promote individual liberty, constitutional government, sound money, free markets, and a noninterventionist foreign policy. As a gentleman in a colonial outfit, complete with tricorn hat, plays "Yankee Doodle" on a fife to call the meeting to order, an organizer named Deb Hopper rushes over and tells me I've got to go, this is a closed meeting.

"We're going to get down to some of the tactics we're going to be using," she says.

"What are they?" I ask.

"Not gonna discuss it," she says.

"Just one tactic?" I plead.

"Not gonna discuss it," she fiercely reiterates, before bouncing me to the sound of fife music, giving me a taste of how the Redcoats felt in the 1700s.

The next day, I attend the "Rally for the Republic" at the Target Center with 12,000 or so Paultards. The rally intends to call "the GOP back to its roots," if by "roots," you mean lots of people in tricorn hats, whose idea of a good time is batting around their favorite economists from the Austrian School. (I'm partial to Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, but then, who isn't?)

My journalistic detachment is dealt a blow, since emceeing the event is my friend and former Weekly Standard colleague, MSNBC's Tucker Carlson. We both like to think of ourselves as conservatives with strong libertarian overtones. We certainly like to do whatever we want, whenever we want, and hate paying taxes, as our libertarian brothers do.

Tucker did a hang-out with Paul piece last year for the *New Republic*, and I suggest to him that he's gotten too close to the story.

"You can stay on the sidelines with the jackals, or enter the arena, your face marred by dust, sweat, and blood," he says, archly paraphrasing Teddy Roosevelt.

I tell him I've got a good seat at the press table, but that I'll keep an open mind.

"Sure you will," he mocks. "Write the story before you come. Show up, and fill in the blanks. It's like journalistic Mad Libs. I've been there, man."

My high-placed Paultard source gives me all sorts of insider dope. Former Minnesota governor/pro wrestler Jesse Ventura, who is on the speaking docket, is a serious 9/11 denier. So the Paulians have convinced Ventura to button it on the subject, since furthering the cause of liberty and sound money doesn't have much to do with who Ventura thinks may or may not have felled the Twin Towers. Tucker also won't introduce a speaker from the John Birch Society, just as a matter of principle. And though the schedule calls for a 12:30 P.M. opening bell, "the hemp activists have taken over organizing," says Tucker, "so there's not a chance that we start on time."

Though he's a little bit nervous about his uncharacteristic role—"falling off a cliff," he calls it—Tucker opens the ceremonies with a stirring explanation of why he's here: because, although he signs on to no platform and supports no candidate (especially since Paul isn't one, though somebody should tell that to crowd members holding state delegate stanchions as though they're at a nominating convention to make Paul emperor), Ron Paul, unlike most politicians, is a decent, gentle, and kind human being, who has no interest in controlling you. He stands for freedom and therefore will defend your right to do things he doesn't even agree with, taking political hits for people with whom he has nothing in common.

One of the crowd is so moved by this testimony as to yell: "I love you, Tucker!" "I love you too," he shoots back, "And I mean that in a nonerotic, but powerful way." I can't help but think that this sort of interaction is good for the personal growth of the Paultards, as Tucker will introduce them to something they've likely never experienced before: irony.

The slate of speakers move along in a slow-as-molasses fashion. This must be a stroke to their egos, as I suspect there aren't many occasions when people such as Lew Rockwell, the founder of the Ludwig von Mises Institute, are treated like visiting rock stars complete with foot-stomping and Ron Paul balloons being volleyed around during their speeches. "By the way," Tucker at one point tells the crowd, "if you can't get enough of [constitutional lawyer/lobbyist] Bruce Fein, he will be

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signing books afterward, so please don't mob him, despite the temptation."

"We're gonna rock tonight!" promises presidential historian Doug Wead. And the speakers do, too. Such as when Conservative Caucus chairman Howard Phillips ticks off a list of his favorite Ron Paul bills complete with their congressional numbers. (Paul's opposition to the Trans-Texas Corridor was a particular crowdpleaser.) Or when John McManus of the John Birch Society whips the crowd into a frenzy when asking what we should do about the unsound-moneychangers at the Federal Reserve ("Suck my butt, Fed!" frothed one crowd member).

A friend at the press table notes that "You can't light a match near anybody because there's so much double-knit here, the place would go up like that." I adjourn to an arena snack bar during a Grover Norquist anti-tax speech—actually I'm just guessing what his speech was about, but it feels a safe bet.

Backstage I find Jesse Ventura holding court. In jeans and a Navy SEAL T-shirt under a sports jacket, his large shiny head ringed with long wisps of unkempt hair, he has, since leaving office and moving to Mexico, taken on the demeanor of a deranged homeless man. When I approach, Ventura is talking about his Belgian Malinois attack dog who understands commands in three languages, and who's picking up Spanish as a fourth. "He's the smartest one in the house," he says, making an entirely believable claim.

I decide to bait Ventura, offering that some of the 9/11 Truthers in the crowd are disappointed their viewpoints aren't being represented.

"They will when I get up there," he growls. He says he's been studying the issue "for well over a year and a half," and he feels "very strongly that the truth has not been forthcoming."

When asked what the truth is and whether the government had something to do with it, he says, "I don't know. But I know this, I do have somewhat of a demolition background, being a member of the Navy's underwater demolition team, and I spoke to a few of my teammates a couple weeks ago. We're all in agreement that buildings can't fall at the rate of gravity without being assisted. And that's called physics, that's not an opinion."

Taking the stage, Ventura has the crowd ululating as he hits all the hot buttons, from the evils of the Patriot Act and closed presidential debates to the need to jealously guard our Second Amendment rights. Then, keeping his promise to me (and breaching assurances to convention organizers), he gets down to business, to a little "something called 9/11." It's like lighting a match around the double-knits. They ignite.

Under the impression that there are no stupid questions, Ventura proceeds to ask several: such as why doesn't the FBI website's list of top ten international terrorists include the 9/11 attacks among Osama bin Laden's other crimes? And why hasn't the Justice Department charged Osama bin Laden? Though he doesn't actually accuse the government of participating in the attacks, he doesn't need to, judging from the crowd reaction. "Inside job!" someone chants.

Backstage afterwards, Ventura is further holding court for reporters, after having hinted to the crowd that he might be amenable to a presidential run in 2012 if the Revolution stays on track. "I will be watching!" he threatened.

Tucker hadn't heard the speech, so I break the news to him that Ventura got off his leash. Being a devout believer in the conventional, single-bullet version of the 9/11 attacks (that the terrorists acted alone), Tucker is both alarmed and offended, but doesn't have much time to reflect. He is accosted by some grubby indie-media types who start trying to engage him: "Have you ever heard of the Controlled Demolition Hypothesis. . . . Who I believe did it are the ones who control our money systems. . . . Have you followed the [National Institute of Standards and Technology] report on the collapse of building seven?"

After a brief sparring match with the nutcakes, Tucker looks ashen. "This is crazy. I've got to get out of here. Let's go get dinner." We slip out the back door of the arena to hail a cab and get some steaks. But Tucker's still supposed to be emceeing the event, and Paul has yet to speak.

"Are you going to tell him you're leaving?" I ask.

"Nahhh," Tucker says. "I really like Ron Paul. I don't want to hurt his feelings."

The beauty of the Ron Paul Revolution is that whatever you miss, you can catch on YouTube. (Number of Paul videos: 150,000 and counting.) The speech is a six-parter, so I don't watch the whole thing, on account of wanting to be present when my young children graduate from college.

Still, Paul sounds some nice notes on personal liberty, not wanting to control others, and the importance of adhering to both moral and constitutional principles, neither of which are in fashion where he works. Government should serve us, not the other way around, and we are not beholden to any government for our rights. "Rights are something that are very precious," he says. "They don't come from the government, they come in a natural way or a God-given way . . . as a right to your life and a right to your liberty. . . . A true patriot defends liberty."

It's an attractive line. And it's easy to see why people subscribe to the Ron Paul Revolution. Easier still when you're nowhere near it. ♦

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AFP PHOTO / ROBYN BECK

Why They Hate Her

Sarah Palin is a smart missile aimed at the heart of the left

By Jeffrey Bell

For months John McCain has apparently been hoping to use his selection of a running mate to shake up the presidential race. By picking Alaska governor Sarah Palin, McCain has accomplished that—and very likely a lot more than that, more than he or anyone else could have imagined.

I'm not talking about the widely remarked fact that if Palin performs well, and regardless of whether McCain wins or loses, she becomes a future Republican presidential prospect. Given the end of the remarkable 28-year run of the Bush family—present on six of the last seven GOP national tickets, a record that could stand forever—and McCain's own status as a pre-baby boomer, this was baked in the cake no matter what younger Republican politician McCain chose to elevate.

Jeffrey Bell, author of Populism and Elitism: Politics in the Age of Equality *(1992), is completing work on* Social Conservatism: The Movement That Polarized American Politics.

But even apart from its political implications, the rollout of the Sarah Palin vice presidential candidacy may be regarded decades from now as a nationally shared Rorschach test of enormous cultural significance.

From the instant of Palin's designation on Friday, August 29, the American left went into a collective mass seizure from which it shows no sign of emerging. The left blogosphere and elite media have, for the moment, joined forces and become indistinguishable from each other, and from the supermarket tabloids, in their desire to find and use anything that will criminalize and/or humiliate Palin and her family. In sharp contrast to the yearlong restraint shown toward truthful reports about John Edwards's affair, bizarre rumors have been reported as news, and, according to McCain campaign director Steve Schmidt, nationally known members of the elite media have besieged him with preposterous demands.

The most striking thing in purely political terms about this hurricane of elite rage is the built-in likelihood that it will backfire. It's not simply that it is highly capable of generating sympathy for Palin among puzzled undecided voters and of infuriating and motivating a previously placid

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GOP base, neither of which is in the interest of the Obama-Biden campaign. It also created an opening for Palin herself to look calm, composed, competent, and funny in response.

In her acceptance speech last Wednesday night, anyone could see the poise and skill that undoubtedly attracted McCain's attention months ago, when few others were even aware that he was looking. But it was precisely the venom of the left's assault that heightened the drama and made it a riveting television event. Palin benefited from her ability to project full awareness of the volume and relentlessness of the attacks without showing a scintilla of resentment or self-pity.

This is a rare talent, one shared by Franklin D. Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan. For this quality to have even a chance to develop, there must be something real to serve as an emotional backdrop: disproportionate, crazy-seeming rage by one's political enemies. Roosevelt was on his party's national ticket five times and Reagan sought the presidency four times. Each became governor of what at the time was the nation's most populous state. It took Roosevelt and Reagan decades of national prominence and pitched ideological combat to achieve the gift of enemies like these. Yet the American left awarded Sarah Palin this gift seemingly within a microsecond of her appearance on the national stage in Dayton, Ohio. Why?

The most important thing to know about the left today is that it is centered on social issues. At root, it always has been, ever since the movement took form and received its name in the revolutionary Paris of the 1790s. In order to drive toward a vision of true human liberation, all the institutions and moral codes we associate with civilization had to be torn down. The institutions targeted in revolutionary France included the monarchy and the nobility, but even higher on the enemies list of the Jacobins and their allies were organized religion and the family, institutions in which the moral values of traditional society could be preserved and passed on outside the control of the leftist vanguard.

Full human liberation always remained the ultimate vision of the left—Marx, for one, was explicit on this point—but the left in its more than 200-year history has been flexible and adaptable in the forms it was willing to assume and the projects it was willing to undertake in pursuit of its anti-institutional goals. For more than a hundred years, the central project of the global left was socialism.

It's hard to credit today, but as recently as the 1940s most Western political elites believed government ownership of business and national planning were the keys to economic modernization. Even when socialism's economic prestige was eroded by the West's capitalist boom after World War II, socialism retained credibility as a means of income redistribution.

It was the turbulent 1960s that proved a strategic turning point for the left. The worldwide social and cultural upheavals that culminated in 1968 were felt as a crisis of confidence by institutions in the West. Some institutions (universities, for example) defected to the rebels, while others saw their centuries-long influence on the population greatly weaken or drain away virtually overnight.

In the short run, most political elites weathered the storm. A big reason, the left gradually realized, was that socialist economics had become an albatross. Increasingly, the democratic parties of the left in Western countries downplayed socialism or even decoupled from it, leaving them free to pursue the anti-institutional, relativistic moral crusade that has been in the DNA of the left all along.

This newly revitalized social and cultural agenda made it possible for the left to shrug off the collapse of European communism and the Soviet Union nearly two decades ago. Even in countries like China where the Communist party retained dictatorial power, socialist economics became a thing of the past. Attempts to suppress religion and limit the autonomy of the family did not.

For the post-1960s, post-socialist left, the single most important breakthrough has been the alliance between modern feminism and the sexual revolution. This was far from inevitable. Up until around 1960, attempts at sexual liberation were resisted by most educated women. In the wake of the success of *Playboy* and other mass-circulation pornographic magazines in the 1950s, men were depicted as the initiators and main beneficiaries of sexual liberation, women as intolerant of promiscuity as well as potential victims of predatory "liberated" men.

With the introduction of the Pill around 1960, things abruptly began to change. Fears of overpopulation legitimated a contraceptive ethic throughout middle-class society in North America, Europe, Japan, and the Soviet bloc. China, which discouraged contraception and welcomed population gains under Mao Zedong, flipped to the extreme of the One Child policy in 1979, shortly after pro-capitalist reformers took charge and fixed on strict population control as an integral and unquestioned part of the package of Western-style development.

The fact that the Pill was taken only by women gave them a greater feeling of control over their sexual activity and eroded their social and psychological resistance to premarital sex. "No fault" divorce, a term borrowed from the field of auto insurance, in reality amounted to unilateral divorce and began to undermine the idea of marriage as a binding mutual contract oriented toward the procreation and nurturing of children. Contrary to nearly every prediction, the ubiquity of far more reliable methods of contra-

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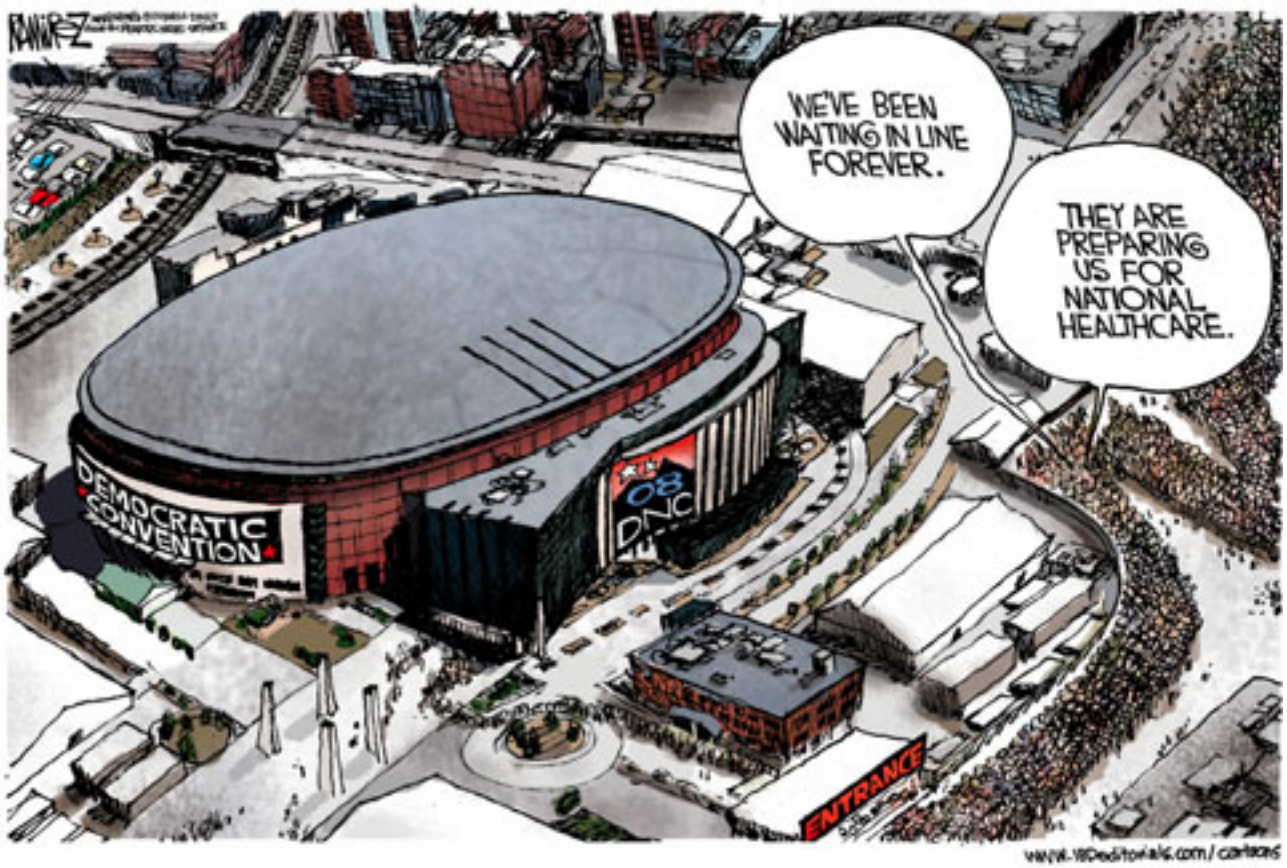
ception and the growing ideological separation of sex from reproduction, coincided with a huge increase in unwed pregnancies.

Though earlier versions of feminism tended to embrace children and elevate motherhood, the more adversarial feminism that gained a mass base in virtually every affluent democracy beginning in the 1970s preached that children and childbearing were the central instrumentality of men's subjugation of women. This more than anything else in the menu of the post-socialist left raised toward cultural consensus a vision in which the monogamous family was what prevented humanity from achieving a Rousseau-like "natural" state of freedom from all laws and all bonds of mutual obligation.

If this analysis is correct, the single most important narrative holding the left together in today's politics and culture is the one offered—often with little or no dissent—by adversarial feminism. The premise of this narrative is that for women to achieve dignity and self-fulfillment in modern society, they must distance themselves, not necessarily from men or marriage or childbearing, but from the kind of marriage in which a mother's temptation to be with and enjoy several children becomes a synonym for holding women back and cheating them out of professional success.

On August 29, in the immediate aftermath of the announcement by the McCain campaign, all that was widely known of the governor of Alaska was that she was married with five children, the last one of whom had been carried to term with Down syndrome, and that she was pro-life. No one knew that her oldest daughter was pregnant. No one knew much about what she had done as governor or in her previous career. No one knew how she had been drawn into politics, or that her sister had had a reckless husband and a contentious divorce. Above all, with the possible exception of John McCain, no one knew that Sarah Palin was both a married mother of five and a brilliant political talent with a chance not just to change the dynamics of the 2008 election but to rise to the top level of American politics, whatever happens this year.

The simple fact of her being a pro-life married mother of five with a thriving political career was—before anything else about her was known—enough for the left and its outliers to target her for destruction. She could not be allowed to contradict symbolically one of the central narratives of the left. How galling it will be to Sarah Palin's many new enemies if she survives this assault and prevails. If she does, her success may be an important moment in the struggle to shape not just America's politics but its culture. ♦



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Roundup at Jamul, California, June 20, 1996

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Who Gets In

And what happens once they're here

BY PETER SKERRY

The New Case Against Immigration lives up to its title. Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, Washington's most respected restrictionist voice, has produced a radical but constructively provocative case for the fundamental incompatibility of mass immigration with mature modern societies. Arguing that America has outgrown mass immigration, he mounts a frontal assault on all its forms—legal as well as illegal, skilled as well as unskilled.

One does not have to agree with Krikorian to see that this is no screed by a neo-Malthusian doomsayer, or nativist zealot. Neither does it bear any trace of the outraged naiveté that characterizes so much restrictionist commentary. The grandson of Armenian immigrants, Krikorian has produced a well-researched, policy savvy book whose comprehensiveness and verve ought to embarrass Washington's major think tanks, which veer between narrowly technical and evasively high-minded approaches to the topic.

The New Case Against Immigration
Both Legal and Illegal
by Mark Krikorian
Sentinel, 304 pp., $25.95

At the core of Krikorian's analysis is his refrain: "It's not the immigrants, it's us." He explicitly rejects the view that immigrants today, especially Hispanics, are unwilling or unable to assimilate. Rather, he argues that they are not assimilating because multicultural elites are encouraging them not to, through such misguided policies as foreign-language ballots, bilingual education, ethnic studies programs, and dual citizenship. He also emphasizes how Spanish-language electronic media and easy air travel back home similarly retard assimilation.

Yet these familiar points do not represent Krikorian's strongest suit. In fact, he ignores abundant evidence that, despite such multicultural efforts, Hispanic immigrants and their children are learning English and adopting American values. And while he correctly highlights the potential problems posed by huge concentrations of immigrants from one social, cultural, linguistic group (Hispanics), Krikorian goes too far when he asserts that its largest component, Mexican immigrants and their offspring, is "marginalized from the American mainstream."

Nevertheless, Krikorian dismisses restrictionist nightmares about Chicano radicals bringing about a *recon-*

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quista by Mexico of territory lost to the United States in 1848. Readily acknowledging "the genuine American patriotism of millions of Hispanic citizens," he prudently chooses not to obsess about Mexican flags at street demonstrations and soccer games. "There will be no secession of the Southwest from the Union," he concludes. Yet he does insist that the loyalty of Hispanics "doesn't change the fact that Mexico is already actively involved in American domestic politics ostensibly on their behalf." He argues persuasively that, while Americans are not paying attention, Mexico is advancing its own national agenda based on its sense of historical grievance, demanding for Mexican citizens in the United States, and even for Mexican Americans, prerogatives and rights that are not enjoyed by Mexico's own foreign nationals, and even naturalized citizens. Yet again, Krikorian pushes the point too far when he concludes: "In a modern society there are two choices: mass immigration accompanied by a progressive loss of sovereignty, or protection of sovereignty through limits on immigration."

Similarly strained is Krikorian's perspective on immigration and national security. He is certainly correct to dismiss the foolish rhetoric that "there's no relationship between immigration and terrorism." Usefully, he shows how Homeland Security is overwhelmed by the monitoring of the entry and exit of millions of individuals every year. Emphasizing the customer service mentality that seeks to keep the traffic moving with minimal delays, he again stresses that the problem is not immigrants, but us. Focusing on America's failure to grasp the full implications of today's asymmetric warfare, he argues that immigrant communities are potential staging areas for terrorists.

This is undoubtedly true, but is that the end of the story? For example, he never considers the evidence that Muslim Americans can be valuable assets in the struggle against Islamist terrorists.

Krikorian is on more solid footing when addressing the demographic implications of immigration. He points out that because immigrants only slightly increase America's fertility rate, they reduce the average age of the population minimally. So immigrants won't solve America's Social Security problems. Nevertheless, they do contribute significantly to overall population growth, which he regards as too high to sustain Americans' present quality of life: "The real population question for Americans is not whether a Malthusian catastrophe awaits us but rather what kind of life we will bequeath to our grandchildren."

Krikorian is particularly deft when analyzing the impact of immigration on government spending. He lays out the data demonstrating conclusively that immigrants are a net fiscal burden, now and in the foreseeable future, especially at the state and local levels. As have others, he points out that one-fourth of those without health insurance are immigrants. But digging deeper, he points out that most of the growth in the uninsured is traceable to immigrants. He invokes Milton Friedman's observation that "you can't have free immigration and a welfare state." But unlike many free-marketeers and libertarians, he rejects the notion that immigration can be used to undermine the welfare state. Self-conscious realist that he is, Krikorian sees that Americans lack the political will to deny social welfare benefits to immigrants and their children, pointing to failed efforts to do so amid welfare reform during the 1990s. As he concludes, "Walling immigrants off from government benefits once we've let them in is a fantasy."

Mark Krikorian

Most compelling is Krikorian's analysis of the economic impact of immigration. Drawing on the research of economist George Borjas and others, he demonstrates that immigrants represent an increasing proportion of the poor, and that the income gap between immigrants and natives has been widening, while the children of immigrants have been making gains relative to their parents but earning less than other Americans. One result is increased competition at the bottom of the labor market between immigrants and unskilled American workers, especially African Americans—though Krikorian is careful to note that this is hardly the only problem confronting poor blacks. Finally, he argues that the huge influx of unskilled immigrants is discouraging investment in innovative technologies that increase productivity.

Reading Krikorian's uncompromising critique, one cannot help but wonder what drastic policy recommendations will follow. Yet his actual proposals fall far short of his radical views. Relying on a "zero-based budgeting" approach to the question of how many legal immigrants to admit annually, he comes up with 400,000—less than half the approximately one million we have been admitting in recent years. To achieve this, he would limit family-based admittances to spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens, excluding parents, adult siblings, and the adult children of legal residents and citizens.

To support his "pro-immigrant policy of low immigration," he urges increased funding for immigration services, including expanded English-language instruction and the establishment of immigrant welcome centers. As for the 12 million or more illegals here, he rejects mass deportations but also opposes any kind of amnesty, proposing instead "attrition through enforcement"—that is, rigorous appli-

CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES / ELI TURNER

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cation of existing immigration laws, especially in the nation's interior. Over time, he maintains, illegals here would leave and subsequent newcomers would be discouraged from coming.

None of these recommendations will pass muster with immigration advocates or their sympathizers—or with rabid restrictionists, for that matter. But the main problem with Krikorian's proposals is that they fly in the face of his own analysis. If immigration is fundamentally at odds with contemporary America—weakening the nation fiscally and economically, squeezing the most vulnerable of our citizens, and threatening our sovereignty—then surely 400,000 immigrants a year is still too many.

Krikorian identifies himself as a conservative addressing "Americans in the patriotic mainstream, liberal and conservative." But his approach might be more aptly described as a curious blend of populism and technocratic policy-wonkery. On the populist side, he articulates a defense of "the revealed preferences" and "natural" choices of millions of ordinary Americans whose freely made decisions are being "artificially" controverted by their government's immigration policy. He sees immigration overwhelming the stable or slow population growth resulting from "the reproductive free market" in which Americans have opted for small families. And while he does not defend suburban sprawl when driven by increased population pressures from immigrants, he does insofar as it results from choices made available to Americans by technology and affluence.

Up to a point, this stance is prudent, even admirable. Too many Americans today feel besieged by immigrants, while their grievances are ignored or smugly dismissed by elites. But surely Krikorian pushes his populist perspective too far when he opposes skilled immigration on the grounds that it would hurt the earnings of college-educated Americans. This is a concern, to be sure; but he never explains why such relatively well-off Americans should be shielded from competitive global labor markets.

In Krikorian's view, America's immigration policy is a vast social engineering project overseen by transnational elites insulated from popular pressure. In the one faint echo here of Lou Dobbs, Krikorian invokes the specter of a remote, out-of-touch government that makes contemporary America sound like pre-revolutionary Russia. Yet while elites have behaved irresponsibly, they have not simply foisted mass immigration on the American people. Krikorian underestimates the extent to which immigration is tied to our understanding of ourselves as a nation. This self-image is rooted in history and ideology, but also embedded in the fabric of daily life. In this regard it is telling that he never addresses the perspective, most elegantly put forward by MIT economist Michael Piore, that far from being a threat to modern societies, immigrants are essential—not merely because they work for less, but because their flexibility and drive overcome the rigidities and constraints arising from affluence and entitlement.

At some level, Krikorian must understand this—hence, his goal of 400,000 immigrants annually. Yet rather than articulate a broad rationale capable of sustaining responses to the inevitable demands for fewer (or more) immigrants, he arrives at this number with the spare logic of an accountant. Such is the curious nature of Krikorian's technocratic populism, which is extremely well informed about policy details, but tone-deaf and too reactive to sustain a new direction for U.S. immigration policy.

For example, Krikorian holds up Japan as a low-migration society from which the United States has much to learn. Arguing that America's reliance on low-skilled immigrants retards innovation, he points admiringly to Japan's advances in robotics. Yet he fails to consider the myriad ways in which Japan's antipathy to immigrants and foreigners reflects a way of life quite antithetical to fundamental American values. Certainly those millions of freedom-loving, patriotic Americans feeling squeezed by immigrants are not going to be drawn to Japan as any kind of model.

Similarly cramped is Krikorian's reasoning about illegals. He rejects mass roundups and deportations because of the fiscal cost, the economic disruption, the ability of immigrants' rights attorneys to derail such efforts, and the pervasive media presence that would broadcast the inevitable missteps. Completely missing is any suggestion that mass deportations might be unfair to a significant number of people. Krikorian simply fails to consider that immigrants who live and raise families here might, over time, come to have claims on this society. These are complicated and emotional questions, too often pushed toward a predictable open-borders conclusion by advocates and their sympathizers. Nevertheless, these are more wrenching dilemmas for many Americans than Krikorian's cold logic allows.

Finally, Krikorian proposes a limit of 50,000 humanitarian admittances (refugees, asylum-seekers, and others) per year—about half what we have typically been accepting, at least before 9/11. The problem is not that the figure seems too low or too rigid, but once again, that it is too narrowly arrived at. Krikorian seems to have opted for this number because it was the target set by the Refugee Act of 1980, not because it somehow speaks to the larger question of why a nation like the United States accepts refugees. Nor does he offer any broader exploration of how doing so might be central to American ideals or responsibilities as the most powerful nation on earth. Indeed, he does not even acknowledge these dimensions of America's refugee policy.

These days the *New York Times* clearly believes that immigration policy can be reformed on the basis of the genuinely wrenching personal tragedies that it features almost daily. Serious analysts might well react in frustration. Yet melodrama and moralism must not be permitted to obscure the moral underpinnings of this nation's immigration policy. In this regard, the limitations of Krikorian's perspective are clear. Still, those who reject his perspective would do well to provide as sober and reasoned an articulation of their own position. ♦

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SHAWN MACOMBER

Alien Nation

In the Blobosphere, the horror of 1958 lives on.

BY SHAWN MACOMBER

Unlike many slouching toward middle age, at its 50th birthday bash the eponymous gelatinous mass of the 1958 science fiction camp classic *The Blob* appeared to have actually lost weight, taking up little more than half the shiny five-gallon Union Carbide steel bucket it has long called home.

Not bad for a ruby silicone doll*op whose life story was once nearly titled *The Glob That Girdled the Globe*, although it is worth noting that a human flesh diet adheres to Dr. Atkins's low carb recommendations.

The loss of magnitude has not, however, translated into a loss of stature: During the ninth annual BlobFest, a steady stream of devoted fans climb the stairs to the third floor of the Colonial Theater to glimpse the amorphous alien, inert as a tiny placid cranberry sauce lake, in the very building where the famous sequence of the blob providing a late-night audience unexpectedly corporeal scares was shot. Harry Houdini and Mary Pickford both performed at the Colonial in its vaudeville heyday, but no appearance is as celebrated as this bucket-dweller's.

"When I first saw *The Blob*, I liked that it wasn't Frankenstein or one of those movies where the monster is some guy in a rubber suit," says Wes Shank, the self-described "caretaker" of the blob, shooting a quick apologetic look over at Ricou Browning signing autographs a few yards away. Browning, a burly man who donned the scales and gills for the 1954 classic *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (screened in 3D at BlobFest), appears for a moment prepared to mount a defense of rubber-suited villains. He opts for silent deference instead. This is, after all, the coagulated glop's day; let it have some birthday glory.

Shank purchased the blob and two of the miniature sets used to make it look gargantuan on screen from the film's director, Irwin "Shorty" Yeaworth Jr., in 1965, and clearly revels in the modest celebrity of owning a piece of movie history. He regales fans ad infinitum with semi-trivial trivia—no, there was never enough blob to cover a diner—as his wife sold blob-themed knick- knacks. A picture of him and his ward hangs in the theater lobby. Shank signs it, "To the Colonial—one of the blob's favorite dining spots!" There is something endearing about a guy who can't seem to believe his own luck: "Honestly, when I bought the blob," Shank marvels, "I thought I would be the only person in the world who cared!"

He isn't. Thousands of fans clog the closed-off main drag of this quiet town 30 miles west of Philadelphia for BlobFest 2008. Pins on a map representing visitors predictably cluster around southeastern Pennsylvania, but locales as far away as Alaska, Texas, New Mexico, and California are pricked as well. Several screenings are sold out, with rambunctious audiences gleefully booing square cops, gasping at the monster, and cheering star Steve McQueen in his first starring role—as a heroic teenager, at age 28.

Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Shawn Macomber is currently at work on a book about global class warfare.

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Nearly 600 wildly gesticulating fans participate in the "Running of the Blob," a reenactment of the aforementioned Colonial Theater scene, as thousands more line the street. Dozens enter the Scream and Tinfoil Hat competitions, the latter judged on "originality, craftsmanship and . . . ability to protect the wearer from alien rays invisible." A long snaking conga line forms behind Bryan Bickhart, winner of the Steve McQueen lookalike contest, for the Fire Extinguisher Parade—a celebration of the weapon that finally did the blob in—clapping and snapping all the while to the film's theme song written by Burt Bacharach, "Beware of the Blob!"

It creeps and leaps and glides and slides. Bickhart-McQueen punctuate verses with blasts of a fire extinguisher. A woman dances with a dog in a tinfoil hat. Pictures are snapped in front of a fire engine used in the film. Vendors hawk everything from vintage blob books and T-shirts to "collectible" worn plastic Pillsbury Doughboys and lava lamps. Booklets of Blobkus—sample: "Remakes, sequels, sure / But at least the Blob never / Did Hollywood Squares"—are handed out.

"On a scale of one to 10, with one being throw-Jane-at-it-to-give-myself-time-to-escape, and 10 being save-the-town, I'd come in around a five," Bickhart muses when asked how he might stack up against the real McQueen in a blob fight, adding that he has donned the fake mole for the contest mostly at the urging of "a cute girl" and isn't very drama-oriented. "Maybe I can just chill out front and smoke cigarettes. That's what McQueen would've done, right?"

The vast majority of the crowd is manifestly in Phoenixville for the nonstop camp. Others, however, seek to imbue the proceedings with a Larger Meaning, much as filmmakers once injected red dye into clear silicone to create a man-devouring alien. The BlobFest press pack, for example, includes an artist statement from Andee Miskiewicz, sculptor of the newly installed looming bronze blob plaque in the Colonial balcony, in which she bemoans blob-inspired art becoming "more about process than portraiture."

While admitting that her own attempt to capture its essence has been "confounding in many ways," Miskiewicz nonetheless regrets that so few recognize the blob for what "He"—its gender inexplicably not quite so confounding—truly is: "a movement, a shadow, a lovely transparency." And if you're wondering why she added a "rub me for luck" feature, it was so the plaque could double as "a mythic symbol people can share with their children, lovers, visitors, etc."

The constant frisking of the blob, figurative or otherwise, for mythic import or cultural symbolism is how (I suppose) a gaggle of anti-global warming activists from Richmond came to arrive in Phoenixville dressed as bloodied elves brandishing rubber disembodied limbs and signs emblazoned with slogans such as "Blob Eating Coworkers" and "Rudolph Missing?"

"The Blob is fun and silly, but seen another way, also very timely," Elaine Church, hoisting a "Save Santa" sign, explains, conspiratorially referring to the final scene of *The Blob* wherein we learn the military is airlifting the frozen monster to the North Pole, and McQueen remarks that humanity will be safe as long as the Arctic stays cold.

"What's going to happen when the Arctic warms?" Church demands. "The answer is we don't know. It could kill us all!" An ornery Santa finishes a television interview, saunters over and declares, "If you're against fighting global warming, you're against Christmas—and on the naughty list."

Ironically, a dueling interpretation of the film suggests it is advocates of containment who historically belong on the naughty list. In his recent book *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power*, Jeff Sharlet confidently derides *The Blob* as the "Cold War's most ridiculous metaphor for communism," designed to "subliminally broadcast" a fundamentalist Christian message while simultaneously stoking the Red Scare by portraying an "amorphous fight that absorbed ideological nuance as it grew bigger, grosser, and more ravenous for the hearts, minds, and economies of two dueling empires."

A profound interpretation! And also—profoundly wrong.

"It's total hokum, up there with people listening to the Beatles backwards hearing Paul is dead or believing 'Puff the Magic Dragon' is encouraging toddlers to smoke marijuana," says Kris Yeaworth, son of the film's director and a grip on *The Blob* set. He pauses, then adds with a laugh: "Now, my family certainly believed communism was a godless scourge. But that was a completely separate matter."

Shorty Yeaworth, along with his wife Jean, *did* focus on making spiritual films—with Billy Graham, among others—both before and after *The Blob.* And many extras and set builders on the production were culled from the Phoenixville Presbyterian Church where the director led the choir. Nevertheless, when producer Jack Harris asked Yeaworth to make *The Blob*, the debate among board members at Valley Forge Films was not how best to hypnotize viewers for Christ, Kris Yeaworth recalls, but whether they should shoot a film bereft of a spiritual message.

Ultimately, the opportunity to be paid to learn how to shoot 35 millimeter features won the day. Creating a Trojan horse to sneak commie-hating theocracy into the soft, fertile brain soil of America's children? It never entered into the discussion. Howard Hawks's 1951 *The Thing From Another World* was more of a direct inspiration than the Bible, and the only subtext Irvine Millgate (the man who originated the basic idea) hoped to instill in the film was influenced by his work with the Boy Scouts: Teenagers could be upstanding, if misunderstood, citizens at a time when tales of juvenile delinquents dominated screens.

"Everything is raised to apotheosis," Henry Miller wrote in *Tropic of Cancer*, and so it is probably only a matter of time before we are told *The Blob* is actually a trenchant analysis of for-profit health care ("Now, take it easy old timer," the doctor coldly

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snarls at the first victim as the blob digests his arm) or a proto-feminist tract ("My name is Jane—just Jane," McQueen's love interest snips when he insists on calling her "Janey girl").

"We all relate to *The Blob* in our own way," blob scholar Dave Lentz writes in the BlobFest program, and you needn't look further than the German version of *The Blob* poster in the Colonial lobby to see the truth in that: The slight, preppy McQueen of the film is replaced with a muscular *übermensch*, shirt torn asunder, ready to tap the primordial ferocity necessary to repel the *Angriff Aus Dem Weltall* ("Attack from the Universe"). The modern world being what it is, though, the one thing the blob will probably never be again is a hungry, senseless alien that just happened to crash on our planet.

Phoenixville has embraced *The Blob* as tightly as the monster globbed onto the vagrant's hand in the opening of the original film. Blobs fashioned out of red cellophane or fabric hang off many downtown buildings. A café serves blood orange Blob Sorbet, while the Sly Fox restaurant advertises a BlobFeast. A wellness center scatters red foam and rubber exercise balls in its window and hangs a sign that reads "Blob Family." A local art gallery showcases the tinfoil hats. The Chamber of Commerce rechristens itself Blob Buster HQ. During the self-guided tour through Phoenixville and nearby Yellow Springs, friendly locals point you in (presumably) the right direction.

By most accounts, not long ago Phoenixville (population 14,788) was something approaching a ghost town. Settled alongside the Schuylkill River in 1732, it once boasted thriving steel and iron mills, making nails, railroad rails, and Civil War cannons and later helping to feed the 20th-century boom. A mural of a foundry scene occupies a place of honor downtown, although the once-sprawling Phoenix Iron Works was shuttered in the mid-1980s. Like many industrial towns, Phoenixville endured some wilderness years at the end of the last century as it struggled to find a workable economic model.

While no one would credit BlobFest for the turnaround, the event is an outgrowth of the town's reorientation toward seeking and exploiting attributes that would draw visitors.

"I'm sure every town has something unique, something that is theirs alone," Karin Williams of the Phoenixville Chamber of Commerce says. "Our town happens to have a monster from outer space." Kris Yeaworth, a talented film producer and musician in his own right, captures this sentiment in an upbeat, guitar-driven song, "One Night in '57," which debuts at BlobFest:

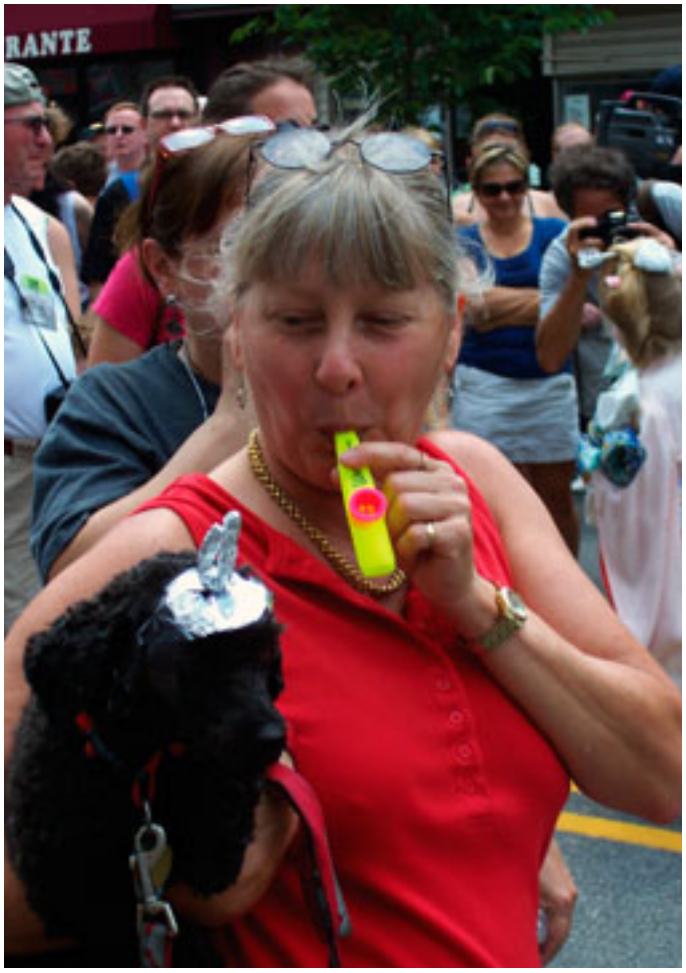
> *So if someone comes to town and says, "Doesn't anything ever happen around here?"*
>
> *You can refer 'em to my favorite year: That night in '57 when the monster came to town.*

It is a bit disappointing, Yeaworth admits, that of all his father's accomplishments, from his other feature films—the sci-fi thriller *4D Man*, for instance, and the gritty *Way Out*—to the theme park he was building in Jordan at his death to foster understanding between Muslims and Jews, one six-week shoot in 1957 is what defines him to the world.

"My father said *The Blob* was going to follow him to his grave, and it has and beyond," Yeaworth sighs. Of course, a $130,000 investment that nets a $10 million profit is a tough act to follow. And while few of us are remembered for exactly what we might prefer, most will not be remembered at all. That's life: imperfect—but better than the alternative. John Stuart Mill said that it is "better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied," and he wasn't kidding.

Yeaworth, a quick-witted, garrulous fellow, understands this. "Does it bother me that I'm always introduced as the guy whose father directed *The Blob*?" he asks. "Not really. It's gratifying to know something my family created gives people so much joy. And it's also better than people saying, 'Hey, this is Kris. His father was the Boston Strangler.'"

"I daresay it's the only 1950s movie monster that still exists," Wes Shank says. "What's truly scary is that it is going to outlive both you and me." ♦



SHAWN MACOMBER

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Founders Afloat

'The fortunes of the nation and its navy' have always been linked.

BY JOSEPH F. CALLO

In his first paragraph George Daughan quotes President John Kennedy's foreword for *Naval Documents of the American Revolution.* The words that Daughan selected to establish a premise for his own work were written by Kennedy to express the hope that the *Naval Documents* series would "make it amply clear the critical role played by sea power in the achievement of American Independence."

If by Sea
The Forging of the American Navy from the Revolution to the War of 1812
by George C. Daughan
Basic, 576 pp., $30

Daughan meets that challenge in absorbing detail, beginning with the initial deployment in December 1775 of a Continental Navy squadron against New Providence (Nassau) in the Bahamas and continuing through scores of naval actions and political disputes, both large and small. And to his credit, he avoids depicting naval actions as free-standing events, instead showing how they were more often than not linked to the land war.

Importantly, *If by Sea* also stretches well beyond the War of Independence to include two post-Revolutionary periods that were critical in the establishment of a credible U.S. Navy. The first of these was the nine years between June 1785, when Congress authorized the sale of the last ship of the Continental Navy, and March 1794, when Congress authorized the reestablishment of a navy with the purchase or construction of six frigates.

During the years when the United States had no navy at all, the Federalists, led by George Washington and John Adams, generally supported the establishment of a blue-water navy. In contrast, the Republicans, led by Thomas Jefferson, argued against a navy that projected American power offshore, claiming it was too expensive and internationally provocative. Those two opposing policy positions permeated the first four decades of American history, and were driven by such factors as regional socio-economic differences, states' rights versus federal power, and conflicting views of America's position on the global stage.

The final post-Revolutionary period of importance that Daughan covers includes the years from 1795 through the War of 1812, when international realities such as the Barbary Wars, the Quasi-War with France, and the War of 1812 harshly demonstrated the importance of a respectable navy to the survival of the new United States of America.

As Daughan works through the Navy's early course, he goes beyond a mere chronology of events and shows how the complex political cross-currents of America's birth somehow came together, albeit haltingly, to trigger America's emergence as a global naval power. The political rough and tumble of the four different presidencies involved emerges as a seemingly counterproductive process—surprisingly reminiscent of today's scene.

As president, Washington emphasized the importance of avoiding American entanglement in Europe's ongoing wars and supported the reestablishment of a navy with congressional authorization of six frigates during his second term. Adams's four-year administration was marked by the struggle to establish a viable economic foundation for the country. He generally followed Washington's support of a significant navy, and his policies involved rebuilding strong commercial ties with Great Britain. His challenges included coping with attacks against American commerce by the Barbary Pirates and by France.

During his two terms as president, Jefferson gravitated towards France and put his emphasis on trade leverage, rather than naval power, to achieve international objectives. (One political ally, Albert Gallatin, expressed that position graphically by referring to navies as "great engines of war and conquest.") During his presidency, James Madison faced ongoing challenges from both Britain and France, and his use of trade to leverage international relations proved to be generally inadequate. In addition, the Army and Navy were not prepared for war against a great power, and the country was politically divided as it entered a particularly testing period.

Each administration dealt with contentious issues that bore on how—at times, even *if*—U.S. naval power would be created. The international challenges faced by each of those administrations were compounded by a common denominator: Each was going through on-the-job training in how maritime power leverages the geopolitical fortunes of nations. They also were struggling with the application of a principle that is now automatically accepted: civilian control of the military. The process was not tidy.

A little-known but important player in the parallel processes of nation- and navy-building was the first secretary of the Navy, Benjamin Stoddert, who was appointed by Adams and confirmed by Congress in May 1798. Daughan quantifies Stoddert's organizational and recruiting achievements, pointing out: "By the end of 1798, Stoddert had twenty-one warships in service, by the end of 1799, thirty-three, and by the end of 1800, fifty-four." The force that Stoddert organized and led was able to overcome the challenges of the United States' first war as an independent

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nation: the Quasi-War with France, a conflict fought at sea.

With initiative and organizational skills, Stoddert bridged the gap between the improvised naval policies of the Revolutionary War, when the Continental Navy was established with eight converted merchantmen, and the formation of a credible naval force to deal with France's attacks on America's ocean commerce. Elements of his achievement included the firming-up of a credible navy officer corps. Stoddert also began building a pool of Navy seamen in America, using recruiting methods that included specific terms of enlistment and excluded the use of impressment, a mainstay of the Royal Navy.

The first secretary of the Navy also brought some organization to America's shipbuilding base, positioning it to create and sustain a fleet of warships that, at least on a ship-to-ship basis, could hold their own against those of any navy. Perhaps most important, the first secretary gave much needed strategic direction to the force he fashioned. Although Stoddert's name does not exactly echo down the halls of history, serious navalists might say that he has a more legitimate claim to the title of "Father of the U.S. Navy" than some with more visible achievements.

Arguably the most important aspect of the improbable beginning of the U.S. Navy is the high level of seamanship and raw courage of the diverse group of men who took to the sea on behalf of a struggling nation—initially for independence, and then for survival. The dangerous and discouraging times they faced required special motivation. They fought against long odds with meager resources. Defeats and discouragement were routine, but they persevered.

Towards the end of these three decades plus, during which the Navy was forged into an important element of national policy, five captains of the War of 1812 emerged as instructive examples: Isaac Hull, who commanded USS *Constitution*; Stephen Decatur of USS *United States*; William Bainbridge, who commanded USS *Constitution*; Oliver Hazard Perry, who led an American squadron at the Battle of Lake Erie; and Thomas Macdonough, who commanded a naval force at the Battle of Lake Champlain.

Hull, Decatur, and Bainbridge each achieved psychologically important victories over British opponents in single-ship combat. Their victories changed attitudes in the capitals of Europe about the fighting quality of the U.S. Navy and the ability of the United States to back up its diplomacy with military force.

The Constitution *defeats the* Guerriere, *1812*

They also changed attitudes in Congress about the political efficacy of funding a strong navy. Perry and Macdonough, while also demonstrating personal courage, achieved *strategically* important fleet victories and demonstrated that the United States was beginning to learn how to use naval forces in a strategic context.

Perhaps the most important aspect of these five leaders is that they were not alone in possessing exceptional courage, seamanship, and tactical skills in their Navy. They were, in fact, representative of a Navy culture that had been tempered in far-reaching deployments and combat against the leading navies of the world. In the process, they had developed a preference for offense over defense as the basis of a combat doctrine.

When the Treaty of Ghent ended the War of 1812, the result was, by most historical counts, a political standoff between the United States and Great Britain. There had been no clear military decision, and each party left the negotiating table without achieving all of its objectives. But for the United States Navy, the war was defining, a coming-of-age.

As far back in the Navy-building process as November 15, 1778, John Paul Jones answered a letter from Thomas Bell that stands out in hindsight. Bell was an American privateer and friend, who wrote of the sorry state of the Continental Navy and sad conditions in the capital, Philadelphia. It was a time of frustration for Jones and the Continental Navy, but he responded with optimism and astonishing vision:

> Your account of the situation of Philadelphia and our poor marine (navy) distresses much . . . but the one will yet become the first city and the other the first navy within a much shorter space of time then is generally imagined. When the enemy's land force is once conquered and expelled [from] the continent, our marine will rise as if by enchantment, and become within the memory of persons now living, the wonder and envy of the world.

Jones's timing was a bit off, but the fulfillment of his prediction about the American Navy was firmly in motion by the end of the War of 1812.

A defining point in the process is captured by Daughan, as he describes the legislation moving through Congress to significantly expand the Navy in the fall of 1812: "[T]he public mood had changed, and the pro-navy forces had the upper hand." The linkage between the fortunes of the nation and its Navy had been clearly established with both the public and its government. And despite the fact that the lessons embedded in America's and our Navy's earliest years have had to be periodically relearned, that linkage continues to serve the nation well. ♦

NAVAL HISTORIC CENTER

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Poet of Reason

Mary Jo Salter rewards her readers with clarity and wit.

BY WYATT PRUNTY

Mary Jo Salter's *A Phone Call to the Future* gathers work from five previous collections and adds 18 new poems. Title notwithstanding, this book is as much about the past as it is the future. Among Salter's new poems, "Lunar Eclipse" is written in memory of Anthony Hecht; "Costanza Bonarelli" is an account of the 17th-century sculptor Gianlorenzo Bernini's art and romantic jealousy; and "Geraniums Before Blue Mountain" is a meditation on the German Expressionist August Macke.

A Phone Call to the Future
New and Selected Poems
by Mary Jo Salter
Knopf, 240 pp., $26.95

Many of the poems in Salter's earlier collections deal with art, parents, children, her husband, the poet Brad Leithauser, plus various friends and acquaintances. The calls placed by her poems, therefore, are not just to the future but to the past and to a large circle of friends and family members.

The call, we should remember, is opposite to the cry. The call is made to others; the cry, however expressive, is not. *A Phone Call to the Future* is to be distinguished from the self-elaborated cries made by some of Salter's contemporaries. In contrast, Salter's poems are characterized by their conversational tone and meticulous description, and governing these is argument.

Although Salter is frequently included among the New Formalists, a distinction must be made here as well. She has been anthologized with these writers, and certainly she is adept with a variety of forms; but another trait is more important. The formal property most distinctive in Salter's poetry is reason, and her emphasis on this coincides with her use of the plain style. Salter's poems are intended for others, and she carefully avoids obscuring communication with emotion.

"Another Session," from *Open Shutters* (2003), comprises 10 sections, 10 sonnets. Here there is ample evidence of formal control, but most powerful is the thoughtfulness by which the speaker recounts her story. She has received help from a therapist, but over time the therapist was the one who faced the greatest difficulty. The poem gives its account. Help was sought; help was received. Professional discretion and distance were maintained; the sessions ended.

Much later, one Christmas Eve, the speaker learns the therapist has died, when she discovers his name while reading the program's "Flowers in Memory of" during what is perhaps her one trip to church over the course of the year. It turns out the therapist was a member of the congregation. The last meeting with him concluded this way: "I thanked you for everything. You shook my hand." And the poem itself ends with that line, but for the speaker, news of the therapist's death extends matters.

Salter realizes not just the vulnerability of someone in authority, but also raises the question of proper exchange. What were the terms here? The therapist is thanked for "everything," but that could range in meaning from zero to—well, everything. The relationship ended with a handshake, but if anything, that seems even more conventional than thanking someone. The pathos in all this rests between the healing work of the therapist and the impersonalism that accompanies such a process.

Nothing bad, only the understated, gently ironical reserve of clinical practice. The poem reveals a one-sidedness to such encounters. On another level, however, it proves that much more than just one side is in play.

With Salter, the subject of exchange appears in many guises. "Roses and Mona Lisa" disturbingly recounts a woman and small boy on the subway in New York, taking the train to Brooklyn. The woman, balancing fresh roses between her feet, is immersed in an art book. She is reading about the *Mona Lisa*. The boy is playing a small "video game of some sort." When he disturbs the woman she hits him across the mouth. The poem ends with a troubling comparison between the boy's smile and that of the *Mona Lisa*:

> *Raising her arm, but not her gaze, she whacked him*
> *hard on the mouth. In time a mysterious*
> *smile had crept over him, almost as if he'd*
> *grown to expect it.*

At another point on Salter's spectrum is the street artist in "The Rebirth of Venus," who reproduces Botticelli's Venus with chalk on a sidewalk even though he knows that rain is coming and all will be washed away. This contrasts with that other art lover, the woman on the subway who reads a book called *Mona Lisa* and strikes the child who interrupts her. But that action is not as violent as Gianlorenzo Bernini's, who sends a servant to cut and scar permanently the face of his mistress, Costanza Bonarelli, because she has taken another lover.

Each of these poems dramatizes an individual's character. The street artist celebrates a great work of art, not in terms of himself but of the ideal found in the original, while the woman

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on the subway dramatizes a quite different character, as does Gianlorenzo Bernini. What the reader gathers from these examples, as from the example of the therapist in "Another Session," is a sense of human limitation. Awake

Mary Jo Salter

to one issue, we can be sound asleep to others. Perhaps closest to Salter herself is the street artist who sees the prospect of rain but does not stop.

Much of Salter's poetry yokes lyricism and wit in a way that dramatizes longing and reserve. "Trompe l'Oeil" opens this way:

All over Genoa
you see them: windows with open shutters.
Then the illusion shatters.

But that's not true. You knew
the shutters were merely painted on.
You knew it time and again.

The claim of the painted shutter
that it ever shuts the eye
of the window is an open lie.

The description here turns into wry commentary on convention and expectation. Meanwhile, "Absolute September," from *A Kiss in Space* (1999), captures the subtle emotions that accompany another kind of expectation, the end of summer. Much of the poem's power derives from its understated tone. Here Salter reveals the touch of her teacher, Elizabeth Bishop, especially Bishop's "One Art." That poem opens, "The art of losing isn't hard to master," and Bishop's rhyming word is "disaster." Salter's repetition of "hard" and the fact that she opens with the same rhyme, "September," "harbinger," "harder," frames matters in an echo of Bishop, before the poem sets off with its own contribution to the subject of loss.

How hard it is to take September
straight—not as a harbinger
of something harder.

Merely like suds in the air, cool scent
scrubbed clean of meaning—or innocent
of the cold thing coldly meant.

How hard the heart tugs at the end
of summer, and longs to haul it in
when it flies out of hand

at the prompting of the first mild breeze.
It leaves us by degrees
only, but for one who sees

summer as an absolute,
Pure State of Light and Heat, the height
to which one cannot raise a doubt,

as soon as one leaf's off the tree
no day following can fall free
of the drift of melancholy.

Delivered with the wit of summer leaving by "degrees" is Salter's quietly reasoned observation about coping with mortality. We feel our existence to be "absolute," just as we know for us time is opposite to that. The rhyming of monosyllabic "tree" and "free" with the polysyllabic "melancholy" is typical of Salter's lightening the auditory effect just as her argument becomes most pointed. There is a tactfulness here to be praised. It dramatizes the poem's argument without distracting from its subject.

"Executive Shoeshine" and "Musical Chair" are two meditations among the new poems that focus on how we react to limitation. Both poems end by gathering description into figure. The executive in the airport, grounded by weather, is getting his shoes shined while he waits. Outside, the wings of the planes are being de-iced.

Salter asks, "Could" the businessman "strike us a deal with the weather?" Then she returns to the shoeshine, with more wordplay (she enjoys puns): "The man hunched below him polishes / one wingtip, then the other." Puns appeal to Salter because they match objects in the world even as they dramatize the limits of the world's rational order. They are a kind of shrug that fuses the competing responses we often have to experience: a feeling of conclusiveness amidst contingency.

"Musical Chair" also deals with our response to limitation. The little boy taking part in a game of musical chairs perceives his best chance is not to wander far, finally not to get up at all. Three-year-old Pete, "who any actuary would pronounce / likely to have the longest time to live / of any of us," endearingly, comically, and a little sadly turns "the most conservative":

His mother nudges, tells him to be polite
to the other children. "Come on, Pete, let's dance—"
But he won't budge. His feet pinned to the ground,
he looks down from the hill to where he swam
today, in a pond now deepening to a shade
that looks like bedtime, that looks like the dark place
you hide in under the covers, when afternoon—
such a happy, happy one—is gone, and he
will not be unseated.

Pete could give it a few more years, but who will not understand the way he feels?

Mary Jo Salter's humor complements her reason. The quiet skepticism of her vision is balanced by an imagination that lives in others, frequently in the endearing foibles of others. Wit, humor, melody, narrative, and argument are just some of the means by which Salter's poems reward their readers.

A Phone Call to the Future is an impressive example of how much meaning there is for both parties in a call. This is a call worth taking. ♦

MICHAEL MALYSZKO

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Dearly Beloved

Marriage is an honorable estate, and endures for good reason. **BY ERIN MONTGOMERY**

If you own a television set, you most likely have witnessed one or more of the following: the didactic yammerings of Dr. Phil; the blissful testimonials of couples who met through an Internet dating site; the lovelorn jottings of the world's most famous fictional sex columnist, Carrie Bradshaw of *Sex and the City*. All of these individuals have shared their deep (or not so deep) reflections on romantic love, shaping our opinions—or at least prompting some passing thoughts—on the role of marriage in our society.

Marriage
The Dream That Refuses to Die
by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese
ISI, 225 pp., $25

As we're inundated by these dramatized depictions of marriage, it is refreshing to sit up and get a scholarly perspective on the subject. And the late Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, celebrated historian, teacher, and founding director of the Institute for Women's Studies at Emory University, gives us that perspective. In 2003, President Bush awarded her the National Humanities Medal; that same year Princeton invited her to be a distinguished visiting scholar. *Marriage* grew out of three 90-minute lectures on the historical, moral, and cultural foundations of marriage she gave at Princeton, but Fox-Genovese did not live to see their publication, dying in 2007 at 65.

Nor did she have the chance to put the final touches on this immensely thought-provoking volume, including a preface. And so her editor, Sheila O'Connor-Ambrose, stepped in to write an introduction—an eloquent tribute to Fox-Genovese's intellect, strong Roman Catholic faith, and her "shining full-hearted" 38-year marriage to Eugene Genovese, the great historian of the South.

O'Connor-Ambrose shares a powerful fragment Fox-Genovese had written for a preface:

> Marriage for love—the promise of an enduring and engulfing bond between a man and a woman—is a dream that refuses to die. In defiance of the rising tides of cynicism, sexual liberation, promiscuity (before, after, and during marriage), and declining interest in children, the dream still promises that we will finally be loved as we long to be loved.

This introductory quotation, and the book's title, belie what's inside: a serious, exacting analysis of the institution of marriage and the ways in which it remains under attack. Fox-Genovese roiled academia when, in the 1980s, she evolved from "Marxist-inclined feminist to conservative public intellectual," as her *New York Times* obituary puts it, and her abandonment of liberalism, secularism, and the sexual revolution, as well as her embrace of Catholicism, affected her writing in profound ways.

But *Marriage* is neither a sermon nor a self-help book; nor does it explicitly espouse any outdated notions of what a husband and wife *ought* to be. It is intellectualism, with a warning: Same-sex marriage, our society's unhealthy obsession with individualism, and our culture's devaluation of children will sound the death knell of marriage as a vital institution.

"Oh, marriage will survive as one 'lifestyle' choice among many," she writes, "but as no more than that."

> The notion of marriage as the union of one woman and one man has been dissolved in a flood of options, reduced to the status of one "choice" among many. And if the gravest and most sacred features of human existence are reduced to matters of style, why should we care which styles others may choose?

By lifestyle choices, Fox-Genovese is not referring only to same-sex marriage; she cites abortion, cohabitation, even polygamy, as "lifestyle choices" that have torn at the fabric of traditional marriage. And when she is not defending the sanctity of marriage, Fox-Genovese features historical background on how attitudes toward sexuality and the purpose of marriage have changed over the centuries.

Her discussion of how love is portrayed in literature—from Romeo and Juliet's "consuming love" to the "courtly love" of Arthurian legends to the "tempered love" embraced by Jane Austen's heroines—is particularly fascinating. (Indeed, Austen treated marriage for love with great caution—though each of her heroines *does* marry for love.) How, then, do we reconcile love and marriage?

Fox-Genovese asks the genuinely perplexing questions that are the centerpiece of so much great literature: "Could marriage domesticate the unruly force of love? And could passionate love survive the daily demands of marriage?" These are ancient questions, but no less relevant today. And just like that, Fox-Genovese makes "Carrie Bradshaw" look like the amateur she is.

So far as I can tell, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese seems to have realized her dream: She married for love, and her marriage was one of mutual contentment. She was "loved as she longed to be loved." I suspect that Eugene Genovese must be proud of his late wife's vigorous defense of marriage and the family, and her message. And even though she is gone, and despite all the obstacles standing in its way, I suspect that the dream will live on, and so will this exceptional book. ♦

Erin Montgomery is a writer in Washington.

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Parody

US Weekly, June 30, 2008

US Weekly, September 15, 2008

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